

INSIDE

JUNIOR CHANDAMAMA

AN 8-PAGE STORY-CUM-ACTIVITY PULLOUT



October 2002 Rs. 15/-

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S. Gandhi (Artist)

TRAVELLERS
TO INDIA - 6
(Page 7)

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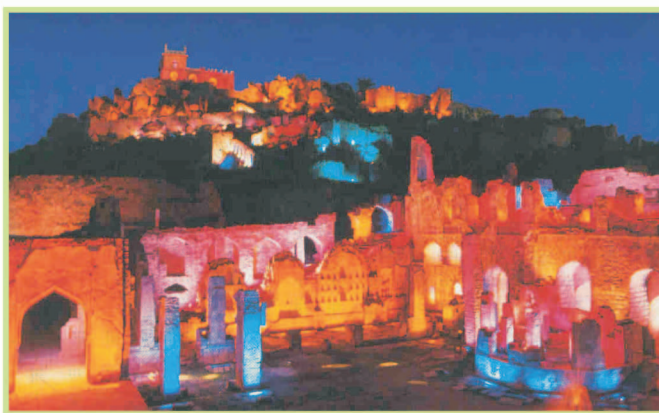
Heroes start early.

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Because it's never too early to be a hero.



Golconda Fort

Hyderabad



Amitabh Bachchan is at Golconda.
He narrates the saga of the Golconda Kingdom and the Qutb Shahi rulers at
the fort everyday, in a 'son-et-lumiere'.

Sound
Light & Show



Golconda fort was built by Yadava rulers of Deogiri in 1163 AD. It probably got its name from 'Golla Konda' or hill of the shepherds. The fort subsequently passed on to the Kakatiya Kings and then to Sultan Quli, representative of the Bahmani rulers in Telangana, who declared independence in 1518.

Ruling majestically for almost four decades, the founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty was murdered at the behest of his own son Jamsheed at the ripe old age of 99.

Jamsheed took charge of the kingdom and his brother Ibrahim fled and sought refuge in the neighbouring Vijayanagar Kingdom, where he stayed for seven years, returning to claim the throne of Golconda only after the death of Jamsheed. During his stay in Vijayanagar, Ibrahim married a Hindu Princess Bhageerathi and took great interest in art and culture. He ruled gloriously for 30 years upto his death in 1580 AD. His son Mohammed Quli ascended the throne at the age of 15 and ruled for 33 years, during which time he built Hyderabad and surrounded it with lakes and gardens.

At one time, Golconda had a captive visitor 'Ramdas'. He was so known because of his devotion to Lord Rama, the presiding deity at Bhadrachalam temple. Kancharla Gopanna was a tax collector of Golconda who utilized the taxes collected by him for expanding the temple.

For his 'misappropriation' he was jailed at Golconda by Abul Hasan, the ruler. Later, Lord Rama appeared in the king's dream and produced a receipt for the amount spent by 'Ramdas' Gopanna.

The king was so impressed that he promptly released Gopanna and sanctioned grants and jewellery for the Bhadrachalam temple.

The Qutb Shahis were great patrons of art and encouraged musicians and dancers. Telugu was given equal importance with Urdu and Persian. The Qutb Shahis ruled upto 1687 AD. Alas, just as the founder's life ended in intrigue, the last ruler Abul Hasan,

popular among Telugus at Tanashah, too lost the Golconda Kingdom to treachery from within.

Golconda was an otherwise impregnable fortress and the Moghal emperor Aurangzeb laid siege to it for eight long months without success. But by then traitors had risen in the ranks within and through bribery opened a postern gate to let the invaders in.

Tanashah was taken prisoner and died in jail. Thus came to an end a glorious era of the Deccan.

Andhra Pradesh Tourism has put this entire act together in a unique sound and light show at the Golconda fort, said to be among the best in the country. Amitabh Bachchan's narration recreates the glory and tragedy of Golconda.

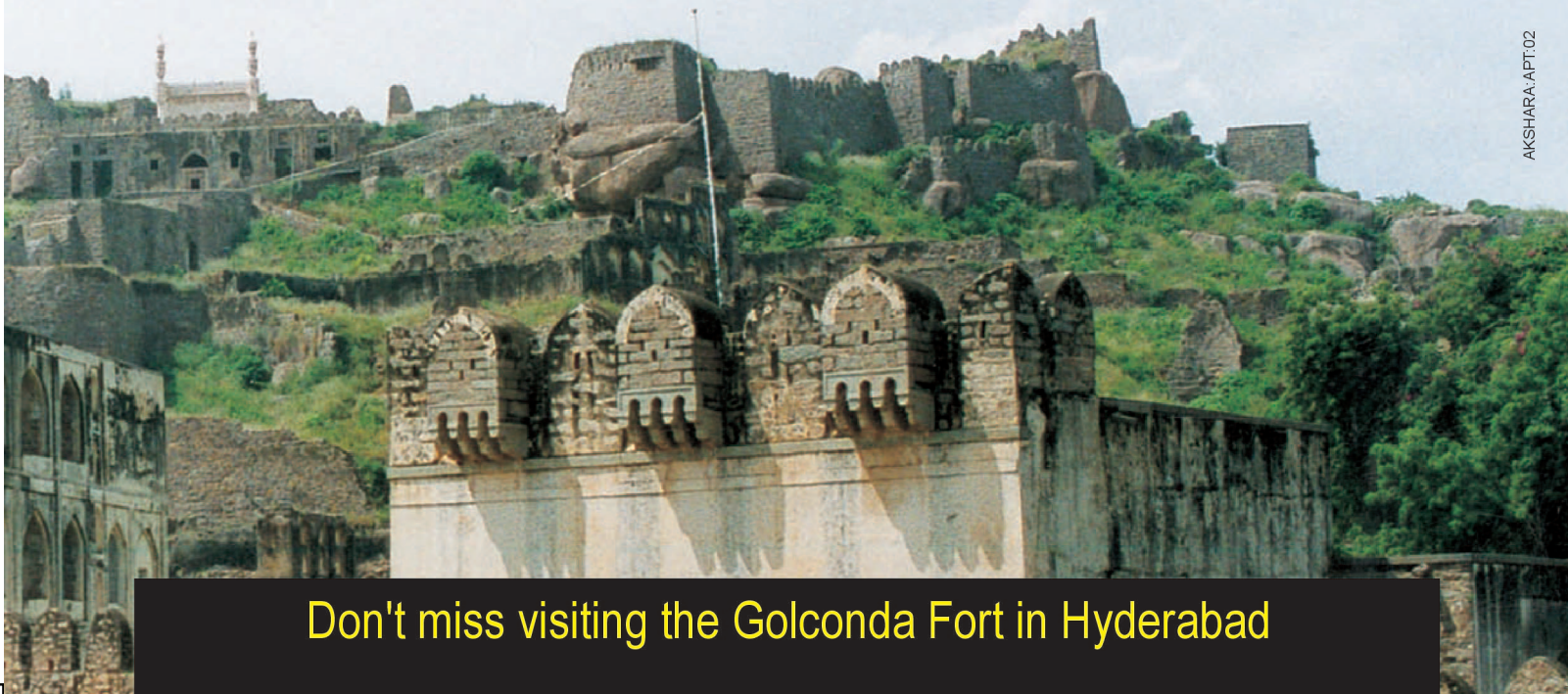


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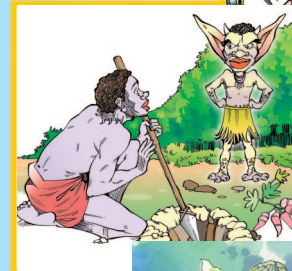
October 2002

No.10

Highlights

11

The Heir
(New tales of
King Vikram and
the Vetala)



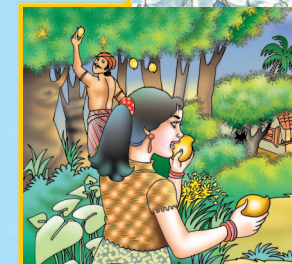
18

**The Smart Boy
and the Evil Imp**
(A tale from
Congo)

CONTENTS

- ★ Nature's Killers ...10
- ★ A Battle of Champions
(From the pen of
Ruskin Bond) ...14
- ★ Inspired by a Book (When
they were young) ...16
- ★ Indiascope ...17
- ★ The Araku Valley (Little
known places in India) ...27
- ★ Laugh Till You Drop
(Humour) ...30
- ★ Garuda the Invincible
(Comics) ...39
- ★ News Flash ...43
- ★ The Return of the Cat ...44
- ★ ABC of Science ...46
- ★ The Judgement ...48
- ★ Ask Away (Prof. Manoj
Das answers questions)
...50
- ★ Vasudha ...51
- ★ Krishna Kumari (Women
who made history) ...52
- ★ Strange Coincidences (True
cases of mystery and
detection) ...54
- ★ Fun Times ...58
- ★ Story of Ganesa ...62
- ★ Brains and Books
(Quiz) ...64
- ★ Let Us Know ...65
- ★ Mail Bag ...65
- ★ Photo Caption Contest ...66

20
Singhi-surwa
and Pali-birwa
(A folk tale
from Madhya
Pradesh)



24

Shantha's Vishu
(NBSAaanP's
tales)



28
**The Blind
Hermit**
(Legends
of India)

56

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His Country**

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JUNIOR
CHANDAMAMA**

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The Spirit of Festivity

It is festival time once again, when there is re-union in families, when communities gather together forgetting all differences of caste, colour or creed, which can really foster harmony and peace.

But, isn't it also an occasion to remember those who had devoted their life-time in protecting our lives but would have lost their own in dastardly attacks by people who have no respect for values or human life, and who take pleasure in spreading violence to promote their narrow, selfish interests? Think of the families who would have become poorer by one or more innocent lives — lives who would have been the sole source of succour to their kith and kin, to take them forward to their future.

Why speak of only human lives? There is violence even against Nature and nature's children. We forget that once upon a time, there was peaceful co-existence even between human beings and animals and birds.

In October we celebrate the birthday of Gandhiji, father of the nation. He had defined India of 'my dreams' — "in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they, too, have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony."

Festivals, which are intended to promote such harmony, will become more meaningful only if we recapture the spirit of festivity.

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and
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Editor
Viswam

COVER STORY

Travellers to India-6

Born in England in 1782, Colonel James Tod came to India in 1798 as a cadet of the East India Company. He first set eyes on a Rajput state in 1806 when he went to Mewar on work. He fell in love with Rajputana and closely studied Rajput culture, social and religious traditions, history and legends. He was the British Agent in several kingdoms, such as Mewar and Bundi. In the last four years of his stay, he prepared maps of the Rajputana country which had not been studied till then. He spoke many languages like Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Hindi, and many local dialects. He remained in Rajputana till 1822.

He recorded his observations and findings in his work called the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, which is acknowledged as a milestone in British scholarship on India.

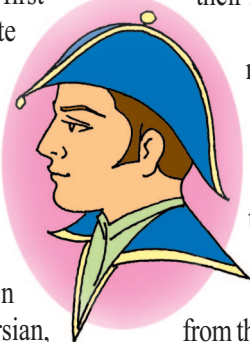
Here is one of the popular Rajput legends that Tod narrates.

Colonel James Tod

Rao Dewa Hara, a bold Rajput king, was summoned to the court of King Sikandar Lodhi. There he was kept as a hostage to ensure that his subjects would not rise against Lodhi for fear of their king's life. Lodhi coveted Dewa's magnificent mare.

One day, Dewa Hara was asked to demonstrate his mare's prowess to Lodhi in the royal garden. Dewa took the opportunity to hop on to the horse and galloped away to safety.

Back in his hilly territory, he remained a guest of the Mina tribals who were being harassed by King Ganga Khichi from across the river Chambal. The next time Ganga arrived with his men to plunder and extort from the Minas, Dewa challenged him to a man to man combat on the banks of the Chambal. After a long fight, Dewa gave a chase to Ganga who, riding another magnificent charger, jumped from a high cliff into the raging Chambal and then safely on to the opposite bank. Dewa was impressed and extended a hand of friendship to Ganga. The two kings built their kingdoms on the two banks of Chambal and lived in harmony.

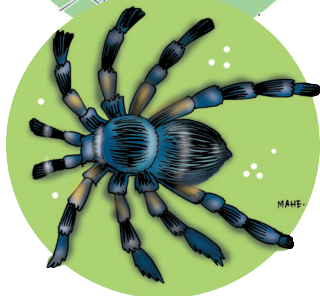


NATURE'S KILLERS



By and large, animals are benign and mind their own business, but Nature does have some formidable killers, big and small.

Talking of spiders, we are familiar with the deadly qualities of all Black Widow and Tarantula which belong to the mortifying kind.



Not all frogs, too, are quite as harmless as one would suppose. The Kokoi frog of Western Columbia,

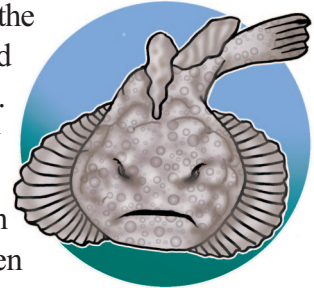
to all appearances, is just another frog, but it isn't. Known also as the arrow-poison frog, local Indians use poison extracted from these creatures to dip the tip of their arrows in.

To prepare the poison, the frogs are roasted over a blazing fire and the poison that oozes or 'sweats' through the skin is scraped off. An inch long Kokoi frog can provide fifty arrows with deadly tips. Kokoi poison has been considered one of the most potent of animal poisons.

It is said that just a hundred thousandth of a gramme, a particle that the naked eye cannot even see, is sufficient to kill a man. Like most animal poisons, it attacks the nervous system and the victim suffers painful convulsions before death.

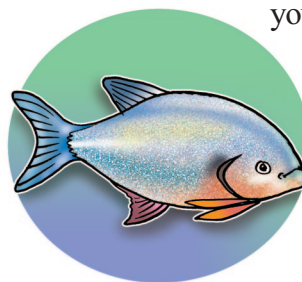


By virtue of their size and the killer instinct, sharks and whales are truly intimidating. However, there are fish pretty small in size but which are fierce beyond belief. One such is the Stone fish, just between six inches and a foot long, which are found in the shallow tropical seas. Stone fish lie in wait at the bottom for small fish to glide by and snap them in a trice.



The weapons of the fish are placed on the dorsal side—thirteen sheathed and grooved spines which are erected on sensing danger. At the tip of each spine are two poison sacs and the moment the tip is touched, the sheath folds back. The poison, then, is forced down the grooves. Stepping unknowingly on a Stone fish or grasping one may be the end of you for, apart from the excruciating pain of the spine-prick, there is the poison that gets injected and takes effect. The Stone fish is hardy and can survive on land for almost ten hours. Even the spines of a dead fish, it is said, can kill—up to a certain time at least.

Don't mess with a Piranha either, lest it dines on your fingers. This small predatory South American fresh water fish has sharp, interlocking teeth, and surely it wouldn't be wise trying out its dangerous possibilities.



- By Kalyani Davidar

Startling Stats!



About 16-38 million Indians are estimated to have been displaced by the construction of 4,200 large dams since 1950.

Source: Humanscape

Conceived and compiled by Anoop Babani

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Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes

Heroes of India - 13

Here are some of the young heroes from our mythology. Do you know them?

1

I helped my uncles at a battle by leading an army into the chakravyuha. But I did not know how to come out of it. Do you know my name?

.....

2

A boon from Lord Vishnu made me a brightly shining star in the sky. What is my name?

.....

3

I learnt the secrets of life and death from Yama, the God of Death, after my father said he was giving me away to this lord. Who am I?

.....

4

I carried my blind parents on my shoulders and took very good care of them till a young prince shot an arrow in the dark. Do you know me?

.....

5

I used Satyagraha as a political weapon. That's a give away, isn't it? What is my name?

.....

**Three
all correct entries
will receive bicycles
as awards.***



Fill in the blanks next to each question legibly. Which of these five is your favourite hero and why? Write 10 words on **My favourite hero in mythology is**

.....

Name of participant:.....

.....Age:.....Class:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Pin:.....Ph:.....

Signature of participant:.....

Signature of parent:.....

Please tear off the page and mail it to

Heroes of India Quiz-13

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On/before **November 5, 2002**

Instructions

1. The contest is open to children in the age group 8-14 years.
2. *Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. **Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size.** If there are more than one all correct entries, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of **My favourite hero**.
3. The judges' decision will be final.
4. No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
5. The winners will be intimated by post.

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to you by



THE HEIR

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. King Vikram did not swerve; he boldly went into the cremation ground and to the tree where the corpse hung. There was ear-splitting thunder and blinding lightning which revealed many evil ghoulish faces. But these things did not distract him. He went straight to the tree, brought the corpse down, slung it across his shoulder and began walking back.

The Vetala that possessed the corpse spoke. "I admire your valour and courage. Don't you ever tire? Why are you always after me? I am afraid too much wealth has made you insane. Let me narrate the story of Virender of Virpur to establish my point. Listen carefully, it may give you some relief."

Virender was a rich and prosperous merchant of Virpur. He was also a kind-hearted man and helped all those in need. He built many schools and hospitals in the city and freely donated money for good causes.

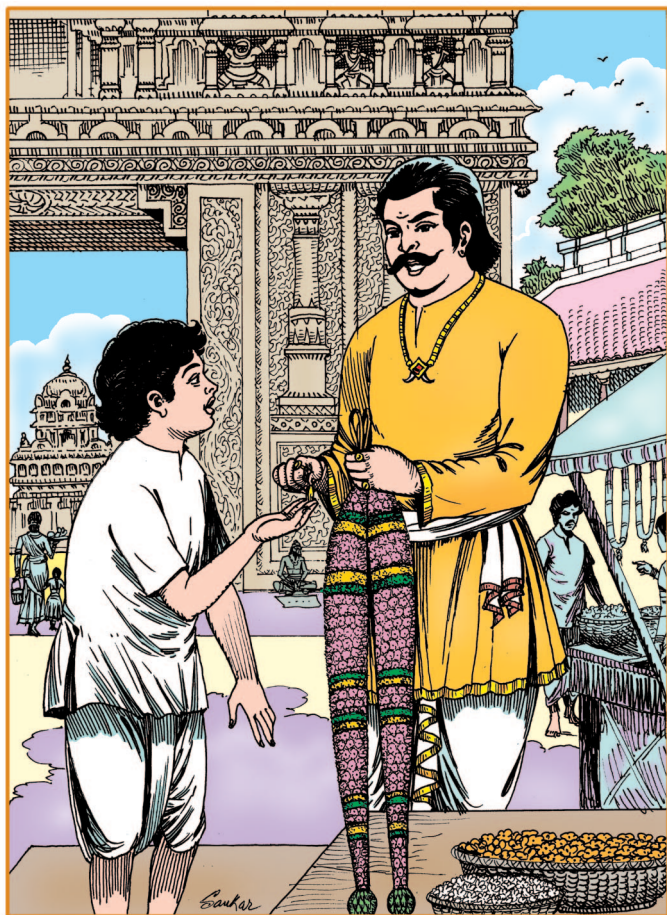
However, he had one grief. He had no heir and was worried who would take care of his wealth after him.

Virender and his wife were always besieged by eager relatives, who made frequent visits to display their love for the childless couple. Obviously they all had an eye on his wealth. Most of them hoped that Virender would part with some of it even while he lived; others hoped at least to find a mention in his will!

Once a poor relative of Virender met him and requested him to fund his son's education. "You see, my son is brilliant, but I don't have the means to give him proper education."

Virender gave some money towards his education and also promised to take care of his higher studies. Soon





rumours among the relatives were running wild that the boy would inherit all the wealth.

But Virender was shrewd to read the mind of his relatives and see through their pretence. He knew they were only after his wealth and did not genuinely care for his welfare.

Virender was a man of uncommon intelligence. He was on the look out for someone with immense faith in God who could be his heir. One day, on his way to the temple, he saw a young beggar boy. He looked bright and cheerful. Virender was impressed by him, and gave him a few coins. The next day he saw the same boy at the temple again. But this time he did not see him begging; instead he was stringing garlands of flowers and selling them. When he saw Virender, he folded his hands respectfully and said, "Sir, usually I get alms enough to fetch me food. But yesterday, you were generous. I used the money for buying flowers. Some day, I hope to repay the money you gave me!"

Virender was very happy to hear this. He now made it a point to go to the temple every day and buy flowers

from the boy whom he found always cheerful.

One night after dinner, his wife asked him, "Why don't you choose one of our relatives as your heir? He can take care of your business and wealth."

Virender disclosed his plans. "I'm looking out for a good-natured boy for adoption. I feel that only those who are god-fearing would be able to use wealth wisely. God will definitely help me find the right person."

Next day, at the temple, Virender saw a young handsome lad meditating. He was impressed by him. He soon noticed that the young lad came to the temple daily and sat in meditation for hours together.

One day, his curiosity got the better of him. He went up to the boy and asked him, "What's your name? What do you do?"

"I'm an orphan. My name is Satya. I hardly do anything other than praying."

"Then what do you do for food? Where do you stay?"

"I seldom experience hunger or thirst. I forget all my needs once I sit in meditation. Of course, there are many kind-hearted people who give me food every now and then." Virender was highly impressed by Satya's reply. 'He seems to be exactly the kind of boy I have in mind. Great is the mercy of God,' he thought.

He then rushed home and told his wife all about his discovery. Both of them were very pleased. They decided to wait for a few more days and observe him, before disclosing their desire to him and the others.

From that day onwards, Virender's servants served food to Satya three times a day. His clerk went and bought a new set of clothes and arranged accommodation for him near the temple. Virender also asked some of his trusted men to observe Satya and his movements.

Virender's men noticed that Satya wept frequently. They reported this to their master. One day, Virender met Satya and asked him, "I'm told you weep often. What is troubling you? Maybe I can solve your problem."

Satya replied, "The time has come for me to tell you the truth and depart. I was a thief. One day, I entered your house with the intention of stealing. I just happened to hear you tell your wife about the kind of boy you were looking for adoption. When I heard that, I thought this was an opportunity to grab your property and enjoy my whole life at your expense.

“I sneaked out without stealing anything. Next day knowing well that you will not fail to notice me, I went to the temple and sat down at a conspicuous place. I pretended to meditate just to attract your attention. But as days went by, I truly became a devotee of God. I weep whenever I think of my past deeds and hypocrisy!”

Virender stood amazed.

Satya continued, “Sir, you’re a noble soul. I tried to cheat you. Punish me in whatever way you want to. Thereafter I’ll leave this city.”

Virender embraced him and said, “There’s no need for you to leave the place. You’re my heir.”

He then took Satya home.

The Vetala paused and challenged King Vikram. “Don’t you think Virender was stupid? Wealth must have made him insane. Why else would he make a thief his heir, when he had better candidates before him: his relatives, the boy whose education he had funded, and the beggar boy whom he had helped to set up a business? If you know the answer and still keep quiet, your head will blow up into a thousand pieces.”

Forthwith came King Vikram’s reply. “Virender was not foolish. His decision was correct. He had immense faith in God. He was convinced that Satya had become a true devotee. Meditation had changed Satya’s character, although he had started doing it without any intention of changing himself. Although initially a thief, Satya had repented and confessed. He had shown himself to be responsible and conscientious. These qualities would ensure that he would put Virender’s wealth to good use.

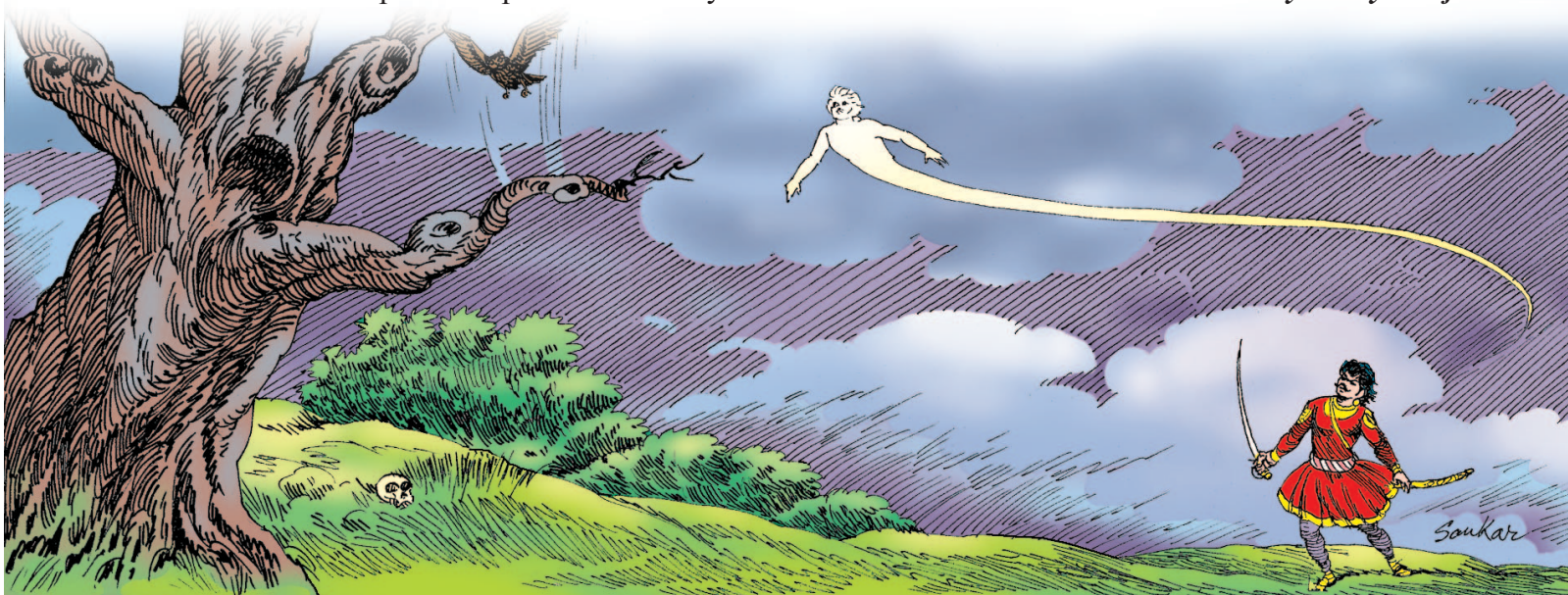
“Virender had helped his nephew with money. He




knew that the boy was brilliant and could survive without his money. And he felt that the beggar boy was also smart and would grow well because he had enterprise. He knew the value of money and the ways to make money, but he was not sure how he would use the existing wealth. So he was quite right in choosing Satya as his heir.”

No sooner had King Vikram finished his reply than the Vetala, along with the corpse, gave him the slip and went back to the tree.

- By Vidhya Raj





From the pen of
Ruskin Bond

A Battle of Champions

Though the house and grounds belonged to my grandparents, the magnificent old banyan tree was mine — chiefly because Grandfather, at sixty-five, could no longer climb it.

Its spreading branches, which hung to the ground and took root again, forming a number of twisting passages, gave me endless pleasure. Among them were squirrels and snails and butterflies. The tree was older than the house, older than Grandfather, as old as Dehra Dun itself. I could hide myself in its branches, behind thick green leaves, and spy on the world below.

My first friend was a small grey squirrel. Arching his back and sniffing into the air, he seemed at first to resent my invasion of his privacy. But when he found that I did not carry any arms like catapult or air-gun, he became friendly, and when I started bringing him pieces of cake and biscuit, he grew quite bold and was soon taking morsels out of my hand.

Before long he began delving into my pockets and helping himself to whatever he could find. He was a very young squirrel, and his friends and relatives probably thought him foolish and headstrong for trusting a human.

In Spring, when the banyan tree was full of small red figs, birds of all kinds would flock into its branches: the red-bottomed bulbul, cheerful and greedy; gossipy-rosy-pastors; parrots, mynahs and crows squabbling with one another. During the fig season, the banyan tree was the noisiest place in the garden.

Half way up the tree I had built a crude platform where I would spend the afternoons when it was not too hot. I could read there, propping myself up against the bole of the tree with a cushion from the living-room. *Treasure Island*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Story of Dr. Dolittle* were some of the books that made up my banyan tree library.

When I did not feel like

reading, I could look down through the leaves at the world below. And on one particular afternoon I had a grandstand view of that classic of the Indian Wilds, a fight between a mongoose and a cobra. And this one had not been staged for my benefit!

The warm breeze of approaching summer had sent everyone, including the gardener, into the house. I was feeling drowsy myself, wondering if I should go to the pond and take a swim with Ramu and the buffaloes, when I saw a huge black cobra gliding out of a clump of cactus. At the same time a mongoose emerged from the bushes and went straight for the cobra.

In a clearing beneath the banyan tree, in bright sunshine, they came face to face.

The cobra knew only too well that the grey mongoose, three feet long, was a superb fighter, clever and aggressive. But the cobra, too, was a skilful and experienced fighter. He could move swiftly and strike with the speed of light, and the sacks behind his long sharp fangs were full of deadly poison.

It was to be a battle of champions. Hissing defiance, his forked tongue darting in and out, the cobra raised three of his six feet off the ground, and spread his broad, spectacled hood. The mongoose bushed his tail. The long hair on his spine stood up.

Though the combatants were unaware of my presence in the tree, they were soon made aware of the arrival of two other spectators. One was a mynah, the other a jungle crow. They had seen these preparations for battle, and had settled on the cactus to watch the outcome. Had they been content only to watch, all would have been well with both of them.

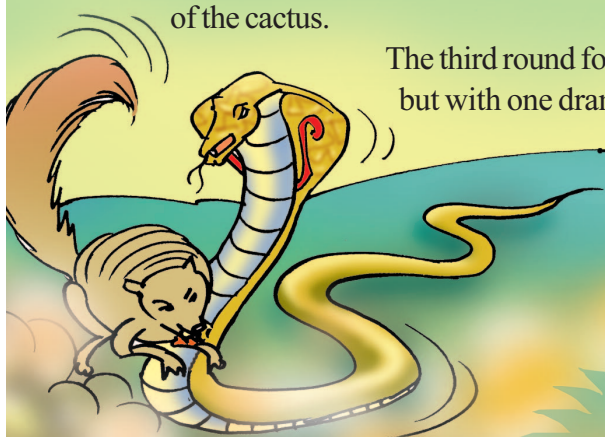
The cobra stood on the defensive, swaying slowly from side to side, trying to mesmerise the mongoose into making a false move. But the mongoose knew the power of his opponent's glassy unwinking eyes, and refused to meet them. Instead, he fixed his gaze at a point just below the cobra's hood, and opened the attack.

Moving forward quickly until he was just within the cobra's reach, the mongoose made a pretended move to one side. Immediately the cobra struck. His great hood came down so swiftly that I thought nothing could save the mongoose. But the little fellow jumped neatly to one side, and darted in as swiftly as the cobra, biting the snake on the back and darting away again out of reach. At the same moment that the cobra struck, the crow and the mynah hurled themselves at him, only to collide heavily in mid-air. Shrieking insults at each other, they returned to the cactus plant.

A few drops of blood glistened on the cobra's back. The cobra struck again and missed. Again the mongoose sprang aside, jumped in and bit. Again the birds dived at the snake, bumped into each other instead, and returned shrieking to the safety of the cactus.

The third round followed the same course as the first but with one dramatic difference. The crow and

MAHE...



the mynah, still determined to take part in the proceedings, dived at the cobra; but this time they missed each other as well as their mark. The mynah flew on and reached its perch, but the crow tried to pull up in mid-air and turn back. In the second that it took the bird to do this, the cobra whipped his head back and struck with great force, his snout thudding against the crow's body.

I saw the bird flung nearly twenty feet across the garden. It fluttered about for a while, then lay still. The mynah remained on the cactus plant, and when the snake and the mongoose returned to the fight, very wisely decided not to interfere again!

The cobra was weakening, and the mongoose, walking fearlessly up to it, raised himself on his short legs and with a lightning snap had the big snake by the snout. The cobra writhed and lashed about in a frightening manner, and even coiled itself about the mongoose, but to no avail. The little fellow hung grimly on, until the snake had ceased to struggle. He then smelt among its quivering length, gripped it round the hood, and dragged it into the bushes.

The mynah dropped cautiously to the ground, hopped about, peered into the bushes from a safe distance, and then with a shrill cry of congratulations flew away.

When they were young....

Inspired by a book

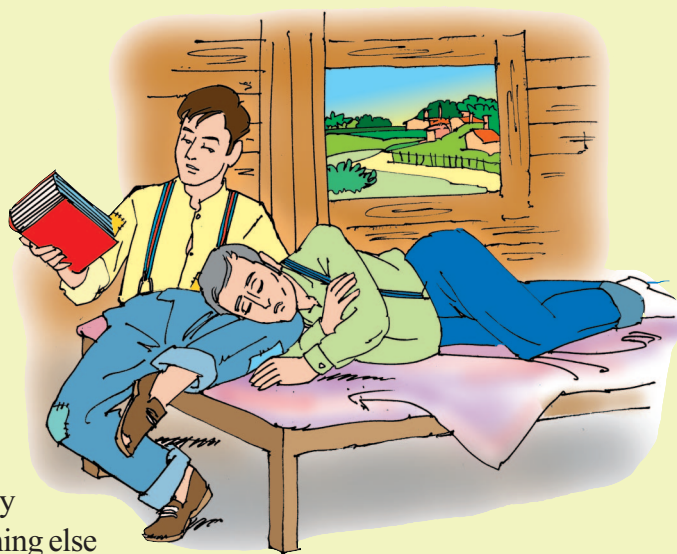
You get fun and enjoyment from books, and lots of information, too. But inspiration? Here is the story of a man who was so inspired by a book that it shaped his thoughts and actions all his life.

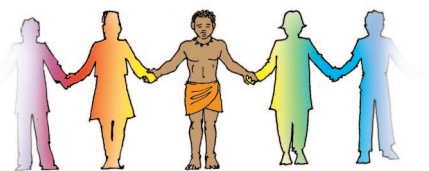
As a young boy he, like many of you, enjoyed reading widely. There were some books which made quite an impact on him. One such was the biography of George Washington. And the opening lines of the book were etched in his mind with absolute clarity. They declared that if human slavery is not a 'sin' then nothing else could be called sin. The young boy thought long and hard about this. This was his favourite book and he read it every now and then.

One day, when he came back from school, he found his father asleep. But what upset him was that the pillow under his father's head was his favourite and most precious book! Surely below one's head is not the place for a book! He thought for a while how he could retrieve the book without disturbing his father. Then he gently lifted his father's head into his lap, and removed the book from there. He sat still until his father woke up! His father was very surprised to see his head on his son's lap!

He asked the boy what had happened and listened in amazement as his son explained about his favourite book. The father's heart swelled with pride and joy when he realised that his son had wisdom far beyond his years. He held the boy close in his arms and said, "When you grow up, you'll surely do something great. You will be successful in abolishing slavery in our country."

The father's words came true. The boy grew up to become a strong, capable leader. He clung to his convictions with determination. He went on to become the President of the most powerful country, the United States of America! Yes, you are right. The young boy was none other than President Abraham Lincoln. He is remembered for the many great things that he accomplished in his life. The law against slavery is by far the most prominent of all his successes. And the world will remember him for a long time to come.





STORIES FROM MANY CULTURES

- A folk tale from Congo

The smart boy and the evil imp

In a village deep inside a dense, dark forest of Africa lived Mabuto with his wife Nzeli and their clever young son Adene. Mabuto cultivated cassava in a small patch of land in the forest outside the village. Like all their fellow villagers, Mabuto's family relished the many dishes that could be made out of cassava.

One day, when the cassava was ready for harvesting, Mabuto and Nzeli made their way towards the field. "Tomorrow we must have cassava porridge along with bush meat!" said Mabuto.

Nzeli was very doubtful. "I shall have to clean and peel and pound the cassava before making the gruel. How can it get ready tomorrow? Just wait for one more day and I shall make your favourite cassava porridge just the way you like it!"

But when they reached their patch, they had a shock waiting for them! The patch was in a mess. Many of the plants had been uprooted and there was no sign of cassava anywhere. "All gone!" wailed Nzeli. "What could have spoilt our patch like this?"

"It must have been some animals from the forest!" cried Mabuto. He was as upset as she was. "We must catch those animals before they mess up the few plants that are left in our patch," he said. They walked back to their hut, thinking hard. When Adene saw them thoughtful and frowning, he was curious and wished to know what had happened. When Mabuto told him what had happened, the clever boy came up with a great plan.

"I know," said Nzeli. "Let's dig a pit to trap the animals. The animals that came once might come again and then we can catch them. We can save the plants that remain on the field and also have enough bush meat for our meals." Mabuto liked the idea very much. So he went back to the cassava patch and got down to the task of digging a deep pit.

As Mabuto was digging, an evil imp appeared there. "Hey, what are you doing in my forest?" it asked Mabuto. He looked up, startled. When

he saw the imp, he was scared out of his wits. He had heard of imps and their evilness, but this was his first close encounter with one.

"I'm digging a pit to trap the animals that destroyed my cassava patch," he stuttered.

The imp frowned. "How can you dig in *my* forest without *my* permission? You shall pay with your life for this."

Mabuto trembled with fear. "Pardon me, Sir Imp," he said. "I have children to bring up!"

The imp pretended to think over the matter. Then it said, "All right, I'll let you off this time. But only on one condition. Whenever a male animal falls into a trap, you can have it. But when a female animal falls, it shall be mine." Mabuto had to agree. Then he dug the pit, covered it crudely with leaves, sticks, and twigs and left.

The next day Mabuto came to the pit. The imp appeared immediately beside him. Mabuto looked into the pit. There was a monkey in it. "It is a male," he said happily. The imp did not say anything. It vanished. The very next day, Mabuto again eagerly went to the pit. This time there was a caribou in it. He was thrilled. The imp vanished with a shriek of disappointment.



Every day Mabuto would come and examine the pit. Every day he found a male animal there. Sometimes a hyena, sometimes a wild cat, a wildebeeste, a boar, even a zebra.

"Looks like only male animals love cassava!" Mabuto commented to the imp one day, but it did not reply.

A month later, Nzeli decided to go to their cassava patch to clear the patch and sow the cassava again. Mabuto was having a headache and so he decided to stay back at home. Many hours passed, but Nzeli did not return. "I'm hungry," grumbled Adene suddenly. Mabuto, who had fallen into a doze, woke up. Dusk was quickly gathering. What could have happened to Nzeli?

"Let's go and bring mother from the field, father," said Adene, who was really quite a smart boy. The two of them set out. They reached the pit and found it agape. They peeped in to see what animal had fallen in. It was Nzeli! She would not have noticed the pit and must have tumbled into it.

"This time it is a female animal and it is mine!" came a nasty voice nearby and Mabuto flexed in fear. The imp was at his elbow.

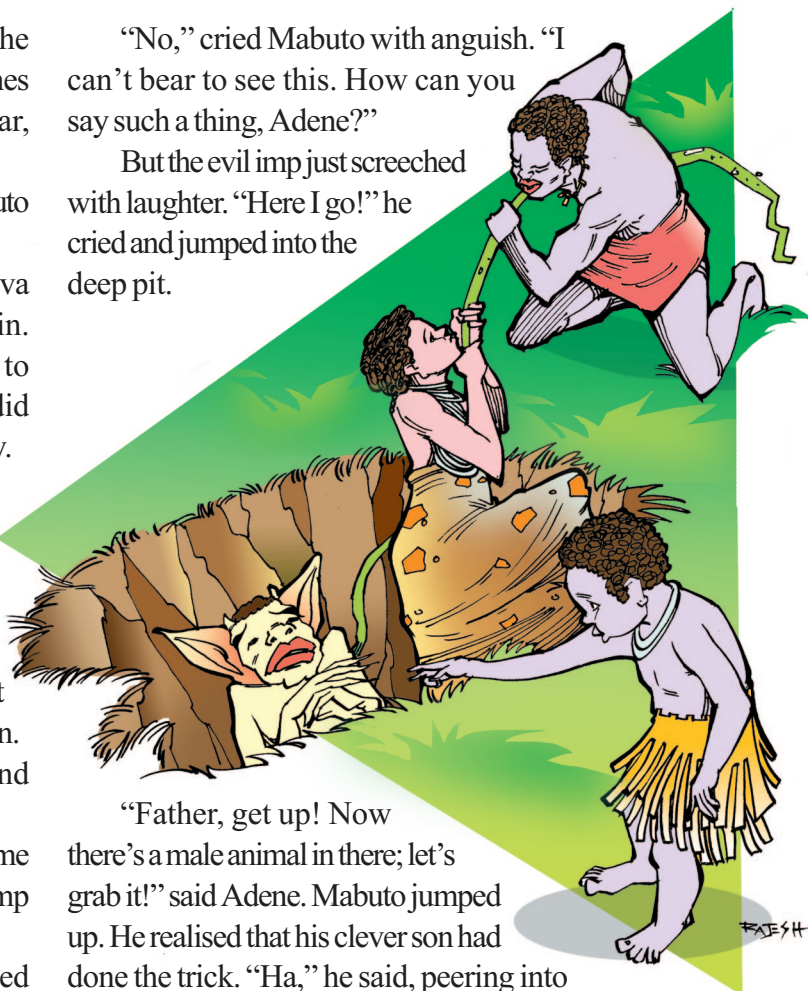
"Oh no! You can't take her. She's my wife," cried Mabuto. "She's not an animal," cried Adene. "You can take only female animals."

But the imp would not listen. "Human beings are animals, too. You're no different," it replied with a chuckle. "She is mine from today."

Mabuto threw up his hands in dismay and crumpled. He sat on the ground and covered his face with his hands in despair. But Adene would not just give up his mother like that. 'Let me see how he takes my mother?' he thought. Then he told the imp, "Okay, she is yours. So you can go in and take her!"

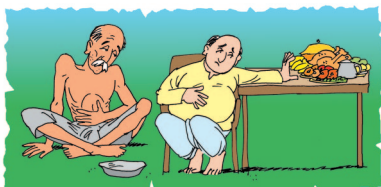
"No," cried Mabuto with anguish. "I can't bear to see this. How can you say such a thing, Adene?"

But the evil imp just screeched with laughter. "Here I go!" he cried and jumped into the deep pit.



"Father, get up! Now there's a male animal in there; let's grab it!" said Adene. Mabuto jumped up. He realised that his clever son had done the trick. "Ha," he said, peering into the pit. "My, my, that male animal would be a great slave to have around. We need not toil in the cassava patch or go hunting or honey gathering anymore. He will do all that for us. I shall grab him straight away."

The evil imp realised that he had been cornered. He did not want to be Mabuto's slave all his life. "You can take her back," he said in a thin voice and crept out of the pit. He slunk away into the forest silently. Mabuto and Adene helped Nzeli out of the pit. The three of them were happy and danced all the way home! They were never troubled by the imp again.



Poor men seek meat for their stomach;
rich men stomach for their meat.

- English proverb. **U!**

PROVERBS FOR U!

He who asks is a fool
for five minutes,
but he who does not ask
remains a fool forever.

- Chinese proverb





Madhya Pradesh, as the name indicates, lies at the heart of India.

Madhya Pradesh is mainly a plateau surrounded by the Vindhya and the Satpura ranges. Major river systems like the Narmada, Tapti, Chambal, Sone, Mahanadi, and Indravati arise from these hills and run across the State giving it a natural setting of great beauty.

The State of Madhya Pradesh was formed in 1956. The new State of Chattisgarh was carved out of it in 2001.

Madhya Pradesh covers an area of 308,000 sq. km and a population of 60,385,118. Hindi is the most commonly spoken language here. Bhopal is the capital.

Madhya Pradesh is home to many Indian tribes. Prominent among them are the Gonds, Bhils, Oraon, Dhanka, Dhangad, Panika, and Sahariya.

The history of Madhya Pradesh is long and rich. Emperor Asoka began his career from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. It formed part of the Gupta Empire from A.D. 300 to 550. In the seventh century, it was part of the empire of King Harshavardhana. The Marathas, the Mughals and the British - all have left their mark on the region. Some great women rulers, like Rani Ahilyabhai Holkar, Rani Durgawati, and Rani Kamala Devi, have earned a name for themselves in the history of the State.

Singhi-surwa and Pali-birwa

Many misty centuries ago, there were two big kingdoms in the region now called Madhya Pradesh. Both were kingdoms of the Gond tribes. One of them, Palinagri, was ruled by a brave king called Singhi. He is said to have possessed many *jaduyi* powers. Gonds still sing ballads in praise of Singhi-surwa, or the brave Singhi. The other powerful Gond kingdom was Berar, which was then ruled by Raja Bhogibila from a magnificent *durg* called Chanda.

Now Singhi-surwa had a young son called Pali. Even as a child, Pali showed signs of having uncommon strength and, as he grew, he acquired many physical skills. Singhi and his queen were very proud of him. When Pali turned five, Singhi began looking out for a bride good enough for Pali. "She must be *khaas*," he often told his Rani. "No common princess will do for our Pali!"





His men brought word of the enchanting ways of baby Gaila, the daughter of Raja Bhogibila of Berar. Singhi-surwa was fascinated and he decided to go personally and propose the alliance to the King of Berar.

He got on to his great *goda* Hansdhar and galloped towards Berar. Hansdhar was not an ordinary horse. He was not only strong, faithful, and fearless, but had supernatural powers: he could fly and also speak!

Just outside the Chanda fort, in the royal *bagicha* of Raja Bhogibila, Singhi drew up to refresh himself before meeting the Raja. But while he slept that night, the sprightly Hansdhar burst into a wild, exuberant jig and destroyed many plants in the garden. The next morning, when Bhogibila was told about this, he bellowed, "Who is this horseman who dares destroy my garden?" He sent his soldiers to catch Singhi-surwa.

The men shook Singhi awake. Yawning drowsily, he mumbled, "I'm King Singhi of Palinagri. I've come to meet the Raja to propose the marriage of my son, Pali, with the Raja's daughter, Gaila." And he dropped off to *neendh* again! When the men reported this back to Bhogibila, he simply swept aside the idea. "My daughter will not marry a *bhikari* prince!" he roared. "Get the army ready and send word to that fool in my garden. We shall attack him in a week from now."

But when the men conveyed the message to Singhi, he just did not seem to care. He slept on and on for a whole week. When Bhogibila's army confronted him on

Panna diamond mines

India had been the house of diamonds for many centuries. It was the only supplier to the world till diamonds were found in South Africa. The one and only diamond mines in our country are located at Majhgawan in Panna district. The Indian Bureau of Mines has estimated that the mine has a reserve of one million carat diamonds. At present the mining is done by the National Mineral Development Corporation, a Government of India undertaking. Diamond mines are located in a belt of 80km across the district.

the eighth day, he had just woken up. He ordered some supernatural forces to help him. Soon an army of she-devils, vampires, demons, bats, bees, wild animals, and vultures gathered there. A fierce battle took place between the two armies.

The Berar army was completely destroyed and Singhi's supernatural army dispersed, their work done. Now Bhogibila himself came out for a man-to-man combat with Singhi. Fully refreshed and riding the faithful Hansdhar, Singhi charged. The duel raged for days, and



Arts and crafts



Madhya Pradesh is famous for its delicately woven saris. The Chanderi and the Maheswari saris in cotton and silk are world famous. The Maheswari saris, mostly in silk and cotton, are characterized by their simple design and colour combinations.

Folk ornaments, mostly made out of cowries, beads and feathers, are part of the tribal costume and very popular. These are highly artistic and very distinctive. Ornaments are also made of gold, silver, bronze, and other mixed metals.

Metal ornamental box, lamps, rice bowls, and figurines are some other handicrafts that the State is known for. Dolls made out of cloth produced in Gwalior and Bhopal have earned international fame. The folk wall painting styles, like the Pithora and the Lipai, done by the various tribes are very famous.

both heroes stood their ground. But alas! One day, Hansdhar tripped and buckled and Singhi fell down. He fell into a pit that had been secretly dug by the Raja's men while the two fighters had retired for the night.

Bhogibila's loud cry of victory resounded through the fort of Chanda and even rebounded off the hills beyond. Every Gond in the kingdom heard it and celebrated. Singhi was dragged to the fort and thrown into a dark dungeon without light, food or drink.

Hansdhar watched his master being taken away and tried to stop the men dragging him. But his efforts were in vain. The soldiers pushed him away. "That's the last you will ever see of your master. Go, tell his wife and child to perform his last rites!" they said. Overcome with rage, grief and despair, Hansdhar galloped all the way back to Pali with the bad news.

He trotted up to Singhi's Rani and burst out, "*Mere maalik mar gaye!* Mourn for the master!" The Rani fainted with a scream. But little Pali-birwa was undaunted. He insisted on

hearing the whole story. Then he turned to his mother. "Mother, you're a queen; and queens must not be so feeble-hearted!" he told her. "Hansdhar has not seen my father's dead body. He may not be dead. In fact, I feel he is *zinda*. I shall go and fetch him back."

"You are too young, my child. How can you succeed where your father failed?" she wailed. But Pali quietly gathered a few things for his use, strapped on his little golden shield and sword, and hopped on to Hansdhar's back. "Come, dear faithful *mitr*. Take me to where you saw my father last!" the boy ordered.

Hansdhar shook with excitement and hope. Maybe his little master was right. They might win back the old king! He would do his best for them, of course. There was no time to lose, so he shook open his broad magical wings and soared into the sky with the boy and his equipment on his back.

Halfway through the journey, they stopped near a river for a sip of water. There Pali's attention was caught by a loud hiss and some alarmed cheeping. In a big





nest on a tree nearby, he saw a cobra slithering towards two baby vultures, which were trembling and cheeping in panic. “Go, prince, and save the baby birds. It is a king’s duty to safeguard the animals and birds in his kingdom,” advised Hansdhar.

Pali climbed the tree and with a flash of his sword, he killed the cobra. Just then a huge vulture came there. It was Gidhal, the queen of vultures. “*Dhanyavad*, my king, for saving the last two of my babies from that evil cobra,” she said. “He has already eaten ten babies of mine! May you be successful in the mission you have set out on! My blessings and my power, and those of all my fellow creatures in the forest will always be with you.”

Then they were off again. At Berar, Hansdhar took

Glossary

<i>Jaduyi</i> – magical	<i>Mere maalik mar gaye</i> –
<i>Durg</i> – fort	my master is dead
<i>Khaas</i> – special	<i>Zinda</i> – alive
<i>Goda</i> – horse	<i>Mitr</i> – friend
<i>Bagicha</i> – garden	<i>Dhanyavad</i> – thank you
<i>Neendh</i> – sleep	<i>Sona</i> – gold
<i>Bhikari</i> – beggar	<i>Baap-bete</i> – father and son

Pali to the garden where Singhi-surwa had taken rest earlier. “I shall sleep here and challenge Bhogibila tomorrow,” said Pali.

He pitched his tent of sheer *sona* and laid his bedstead of gold and pearls. He spread his silken mattress and sheets and lay down for the night. The golden tent glowed in the dark and Bhogibila and his courtiers, who were at the fort, were dazzled.

Early next morning, before Bhogibila could send his men to find out what had dazzled him the previous night, Pali was ready for the battle ahead. He pulled off the golden slab that covered the well in the garden and hurled it towards the palace in the fort. It went spinning and crashed into Bhogibila’s court, crushing many of his courtiers. Bhogibila ordered his army to attack, but it was of no use.

Pali and Hansdhar stomped their way through the huge army. Soon they reached the palace and cornered Bhogibila. Pali killed him in a duel. The dead king’s soldiers, fearing for their life, led Pali to the dungeon where Singhi-surwa was imprisoned.

Baap-bete greeted each other with joy. Soon Pali, along with Singhi and Gaila, the baby daughter of Bhogibila, rode back in triumph to Palinagri on the faithful Hansdhar.

- Retold by Sumy



World's first airmail

India was the first country to carry mail by air. On February 18, 1911, a Frenchman, Mr. Picquet, carried a bag containing 6,500 letters and post cards in an aircraft from Allahabad to Naini. This was the beginning of airmail in the world.



Shantha was very excited. Her mother woke her up with the good news that they were going to Kerala for the summer holidays. That's when she remembered that *Vishu* – one of the most important festivals of Malayalees – occurred during the summer holidays. “Mummy, would we be in Kerala for *Vishu*?” she asked. Her mother smiled and replied, “Yes, we shall celebrate *Vishu* this time with your grandparents.”

A long train journey and there they were! Shantha ran into her grandma's open arms, bubbling with excitement and joy. “Grandma, when is *Vishu*?” she burst out. It was her grandpa who replied. “Tomorrow is *Vishu*. But come in, first...!”

When grandpa called out to Chinnan and Kannan, the old farm hands, to gather all the items required for the *Vishu kani*, Shantha insisted on going along with them.

She walked with Chinnan into their home garden, while Kannan bustled off somewhere on his own. “Where's he going, all by himself?” she asked Chinnan.

“He'll join us soon,” was all that he would say.

On the way, she saw the mango tree on which grandfather had tied a swing for her during her last holiday. Ripe mangoes dangled from its branches. Chinnan plucked a dozen of these and put them into his cane basket. She sniffed at them. They smelt much better than the ones in the Mumbai markets!

“What next?” Shantha asked Chinnan.

“Come on and see for yourself!” he replied.

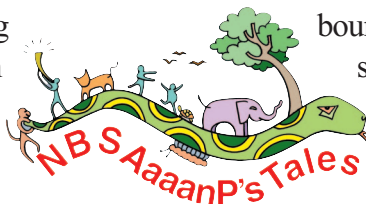
Soon they were at the thorny fence that bounded their garden. And lo! A breathtaking sight met her eyes there. This was a tall laburnum tree with magnificent golden yellow flowers hanging from the branches.

In the setting sun, the blossoms gleamed and sparkled like masses of glittering gold coins.

These will be used for decorating the idol of the deity tomorrow, Chinnan explained. She watched him climb the tree and carefully break off some yellow blooms and pass them on to her. She put them in the basket.

“Is that all?” she asked.

“Oh no! There's more!” he replied as he led her back towards the house, near which was a jack tree.



They stopped near the tree. Shantha was surprised to see jackfruits hanging from the main trunk of the tree, almost touching the ground. And there were so many that she lost count.

Chinnan carefully cut the stem of the lowermost jackfruit and put it aside to allow the latex to dry off. "I shall come later and take this home!" he said.

He sat down beside the basket that contained the mangoes and flowers. "Why, Chinnan?" asked Shantha.

"Kannan will take you from here," he said. Kannan was there soon. "Come, let's go," he told her. Leaving Chinnan to carry the basket back to the house, Shantha and Kannan went towards the backyard. "This is where your grandma grows all the vegetables. Chinnan and I help her with the sowing of seeds, watering, and harvesting," he explained.

"And what shall we do there?" she asked. "We shall pluck some vegetables for the *Vishu kani*," he said. Vegetables for worship? Shantha wondered but she followed him silently. He led her to a patch of creepers that had spread all along the ground like snakes. Some of these creepers had full-grown cucumbers. Shantha played among the creepers for some time, delighting in discovering some fully grown and some half grown cucumbers among the maze of leafy creepers. Kannan plucked some for their use. Then they returned home. After supper, she watched her grandpa arrange the *Vishu kani*. Shantha couldn't wait for the morrow and *Vishu* to come.

The next morning, Shantha woke up with a start as a pair of cold, wet hands closed over her eyes. Her

mother's voice greeted her: "It's *Vishu*, dear. Wake up! Now don't open your eyes till I tell you to!" said her mother. She led Shantha to the *pooja* room. "Now open your eyes," said her mother.

Shantha opened her eyes. What was this in front of her? The idol of Lord Krishna decorated with the lovely golden laburnum flowers. Two lamps glowed on either side of the idol. In front of the idol was a large, flat bronze *uruli* (vessel). Rice, green gram, butter beans, various fruits and vegetables including mango and banana from their garden, and a large cucumber had been placed in the *uruli*. Next to it was a coconut broken into two halves, both of which contained silver coins. Gold ornaments had been tucked inside a folded hand-woven shawl, on the other side of the *uruli*.

A copper-plated mirror stood there and Shantha saw herself in it, in the midst of the *uruli*, the flowers, fruits, vegetables, gold and coconuts. What does this mean? Why are we doing this? So many questions arose in her mind.

After a bath, she ran to her grandpa to shoot all her



questions to him. “Wait!” said grandpa with a smile. He pressed a betel leaf with arecanut and a one-rupee coin into her hands. “What’s this, grandpa?” was her first question.

He explained that since *Vishu* marked the beginning of the new year, it is believed that giving and receiving money on that day would ensure prosperity all through the year. “Do you know why we see the *Vishu kani* the first thing on this day?” asked grandpa.

“No! Why?” asked Shantha. Wasn’t this the question that was topmost in her mind?

“On most festivals, we celebrate the new crop and harvest,” explained grandpa. “*Vishu* is no different. We use the laburnum that blossoms only in this season. We also use vegetables, fruits and other items that grow during this time of the year. When we see ourselves in the mirror surrounded by all the fruits, vegetables and crops of the season, besides jewels, coins and other signs of prosperity, we only remind ourselves that we are a part of the nature that includes plants, animals and the whole of creation. The *Vishu kani* tries to help us to see ourselves as part of a whole!”

That afternoon Shantha gorged herself on a feast. The highlight of the lunch was a yummy porridge made

Vishu is the New Year for most Malayalees. It heralds the paddy-sowing season and it is considered a good omen to see nature’s bounty at first sight on the first day of the Malayalam calendar. The fruits, vegetables, rice, pulses and metals form part of mother earth along with mankind. Most festivals in India remind us of the importance of the various forms of life on which mankind is dependent for its survival.

out of the rice and pulses that Shantha had seen in the *Vishu kani*. It was accompanied by a mixed vegetable curry. Dessert was a fresh jackfruit that was plucked especially for the occasion.

After the feast, Shantha joined other village children at the swing. She felt a strange joy inside her. She knew now the significance of *Vishu*. How wise and important it was to celebrate these festivals. They taught you so much! She felt comfortable: Mother Nature would take care of her!

- By **Roshni Kutty & Malathy Mohan**

Courtesy: **The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and Kalpavriksh**

Fun 'n' Crazy games

If you’re bored of the same old running races and sack races and lemon-and-spoon races at your school or club sports days, you must read this. Here are some crazy races that you might like to try out this year.

Who says a race is all about finishing first? There’s the tortoise race, where the winner is the person who finishes last. Mind you, if you stop or change direction or deviate from the route or move away from the set goal, you are disqualified.

If you’d like to pair up for a race, then try the back to back race. Here pairs of players line up at the head of the course. In every pair, the players stand back to back with their arms linked. Now when the signal is given, all pairs race down to the goal and the one who reaches first, without the arms getting unlinked, is the winner.

Check out the three-legged race. Here too you race in pairs. The pairs stand next to each other and the right leg of one is tied to the left of the other with a scarf. The pair who reaches the target first is the winner.

A variation is the piggyback race, where there are two legs to the race. In the first leg, one player carries the partner on his back and in the second, his partner carries him. The pair that finishes first is the winner.

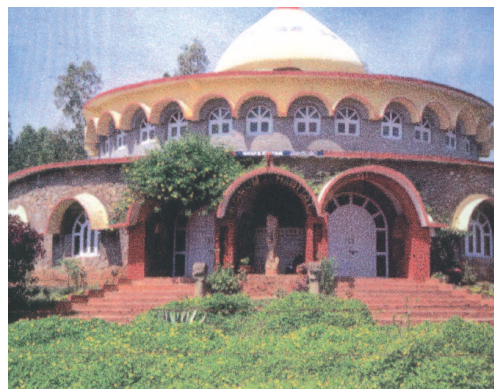


LITTLE KNOWN PLACES IN INDIA

Araku Valley

Next time you decide to head for the hills, you may consider spending a few days in the Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh. Araku is a quiet and pleasant valley. It nestles in the Anantagiri Hills on the Eastern Ghats, about 112 km from Visakhapatnam and it is at an altitude of 975 metres. It is watered by the perennial Zilda waterfalls.

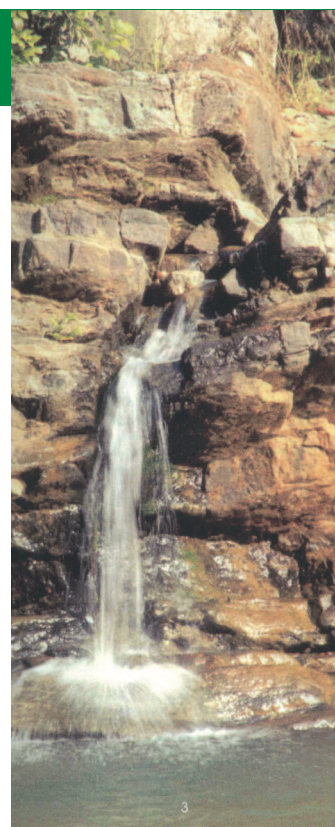
The Valley is inhabited by tribals and is a well-preserved place. The cool and invigorating climate here blends with soothing beautiful natural scenery to make a stopover very attractive to tourists.



Araku is home to a large number of tribals who can be seen at the local shandies either selling their wares like broomsticks, tamarind and honey, or making purchases.

Near the Araku Valley are the Borra Caves, which are several million years old and a great attraction to tourists. Also within reach is the Jungle Bells Nature camp at Tyda.

At Araku is an interesting Museum of Tribal Habitat that chronicles and exhibits the life style, culture, and arts of the tribes who abound in the valley. Here is also a model tribal village. At Araku, you could go on long pleasant walks through the lush green herbarium and orchard where many exotic plants and trees can be found.



How to get there

Araku Valley, which is 112 km from Vizag, can be reached by road and rail. Araku is a railhead on the Kottavalasa-Kirandul line with a train leaving Vizag every morning and returning in the evening.

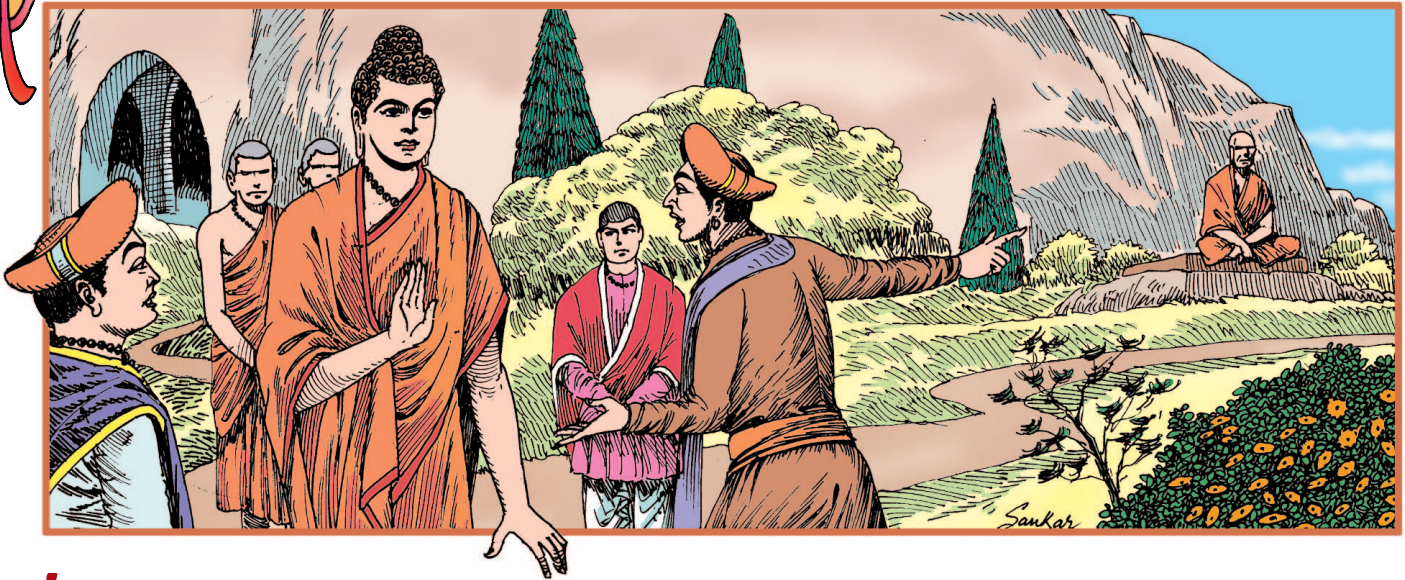
CARE TO GROW SANDALWOOD?

Sandalwood, like teak and rubber, is a much-priced tree, and it is not as if one can grow it anywhere and everywhere. As it requires a particular soil and climate, areas where it is planted are limited. Of course, we know that in India, sandalwood is grown mostly in Karnataka.

The State-owned Karnataka Soaps & Detergents Limited has plans to popularise planting of sandalwood. A nursery is rearing saplings which are offered to individuals without any restrictions, except that those who buy them will have to inform the company where the saplings will be planted and grown, and also give it the option to buy the tree when it is fully grown.

The saplings can be bought from the company's factories in Bangalore, Mysore, and Shimoga. Not many know that sandalwood can host other plants—like drumstick, acacia, and casuarina. So, along with sandalwood, saplings of these trees also are made available.

THE BLIND HERMIT



It was the rainy season, and the Buddha was camping in a grove at the foot of a range of hills. There were several caves which had been occupied by his disciples. Occasionally learned Pundits from far and near called on the Buddha and discussed philosophy and religion with him.

Sunlight had broken out after a brief shower in the morning. The Buddha had come out of his cave and was enjoying a stroll in the grove. Some visitors, who were camping nearby, greeted him. As the Buddha returned their greetings, one of them said, “O great soul, don’t you disapprove violence?”

“Of course, I do,” replied the Master.

“We are sorry to observe that one of your disciples went on killing hundreds of ants a little while ago,” said the visitor. “Now he sits there calmly as if nothing had happened,” he added. The speaker then pointed at an aged hermit who was sitting on a slab of stone.

The Buddha looked at the aged man. “He did not kill a single ant,” he said confidently.

“Sir, not only I but all my companions saw him killing the ants! He kept crushing them under his feet as he walked,” answered the man, anxious to prove himself correct.

“The ants died, but he did not kill them,” was the

response from the Buddha. “Well, we’re perplexed, to tell you the truth!” said the man.

“Look here, my friends, the man you pointed out is a highly compassionate person. There is not an iota of violence in his mind. He might have caused the ants’ death, but he did not kill them. He is blind; he could not see the ants as he walked. My friends, it is not the action, but the motive behind the action that decides whether the action is to be decried or not,” explained the Buddha.

The visitors now understood. “What a pity a compassionate man like him should be blind!” observed one of them with a sigh.

“He is blind because of one of his actions in his previous life. But the period of his suffering on account of his blindness has passed. He is in a state of bliss now, even though he cannot see. His inner eyes have opened up. That is why we call him Chakshupala, one who is guided by one’s vision.”

“O great soul, what did he do in his previous life that made him lose his eyesight in this life?” asked the visitors with great curiosity.

This is what the Buddha said: The man now known as Chakshupala was a highly skilled physician in his previous life. One day he saw a woman stumbling on the road again and again as she was trying to find her

way to her destination. “What’s the problem with you?” asked the physician.

“I lost my sight while suffering from an accursed fever, Sir,” said the woman. “I was earning my livelihood by serving different households, but now I am unable to do so. You can imagine my plight. I have to starve unless I can find my way to the temple where I stand begging for hours,” she added.

The physician, while guiding her towards the temple, said, “I think I can cure you of your ailment.”

“Can you? In that case I will serve your household for all my years to come,” said the woman with great joy.

“Do you promise to do so?”

“I promise,” said the woman.

The physician was badly in need of a maid at home. He cured her with a certain ointment and she got back her sight.

Before losing her sight, the woman had worked in the household of a wealthy landlord. Now that she could see again, she was anxious to go back to her job there instead of serving the physician. She decided to deceive the physician. “Sir, your medicine does not seem to have worked. I cannot see!” she said.



The physician who was observing her keenly at once understood that she was lying. He got terribly angry. “It is a shame that my medicine should fail. However, apply it once again and let’s see whether or not it works,” he said, giving her another ointment. The woman applied it with the hope that her vision would become even better! Alas, she lost her sight once again.

“My sight is gone, my sight is gone!” she cried out.

“Well, wretched woman, your sight was already gone, wasn’t it? I tried to restore it, but failed.

That’s all,” said the physician and he did not wait to hear her pleadings.

As the Buddha finished narrating the story, the visitors asked, “But the physician withdrew the benefit he had granted to the woman because of the woman’s treachery. Why should he suffer for that?”

“My friend, the woman acted out of her foolishness; the physician acted with anger and a sense of revenge. That was his first sin. Secondly, he violated the sacred function of a physician. To cure is the function of the physician, not to do the opposite,” explained the Buddha.

“We understand. Thank you, O great Master,” said the visitors before taking leave of him. - **Vindusar.**

**C
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In the American desert lives a weird looking lizard. It is called the horned toad because of its squat round toad-like body. Like a toad it is covered with dozens of spines. These lizards have a very curious method of self defense. When attacked by a predator, they look straight at it and squirt blood from their eyelids.



The most frequently used letter of the English alphabet is e and the one that is used the least is q.



The volume of water in the river Amazon is greater than the combined total volume of the next eight largest rivers on earth.



Laugh till you drop!

The twins, Rishi and Sashi, were fighting in the playground. Mother separated them and said sternly, "You mustn't behave like that! You must learn to give and take."

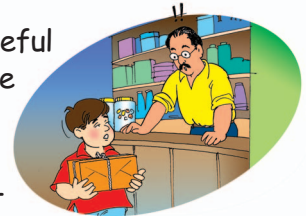


"We did, mummy!" replied Rishi.

"He took my toy and so I gave him a whack."

★ ★ ★

Shopkeeper to boy: Be careful with the packet. And make sure that you go straight home from here.



Boy: I can't, I live just round the corner!

★ ★ ★

Teacher: Who is your favourite author?

Pupil: George Washington.

Teacher: But George Washington never wrote any books.



Pupil: That's why he's my favourite.

★ ★ ★



Girl to boy with a foreign look : What nationality are you?

Boy : I'm an Ice cube!

Girl : What's that?

Boy : My mother was born in Iceland and my father was born in Cuba!

A man riding a donkey came across another riding a horse. He quickly got down and asked, "Would you like to exchange your horse for my donkey?"



"Do I look like a fool?" asked the other.

"No, but I hoped you were one!"

Dushtu Dattu

On Saturday, Dattu's mother goes out of town on an urgent errand.



Next morning, Auntie serves hot kichdi and milk for breakfast.



Auntie painstakingly prepares dosa, sambhar, and chutney. Dattu pushes the plate away.



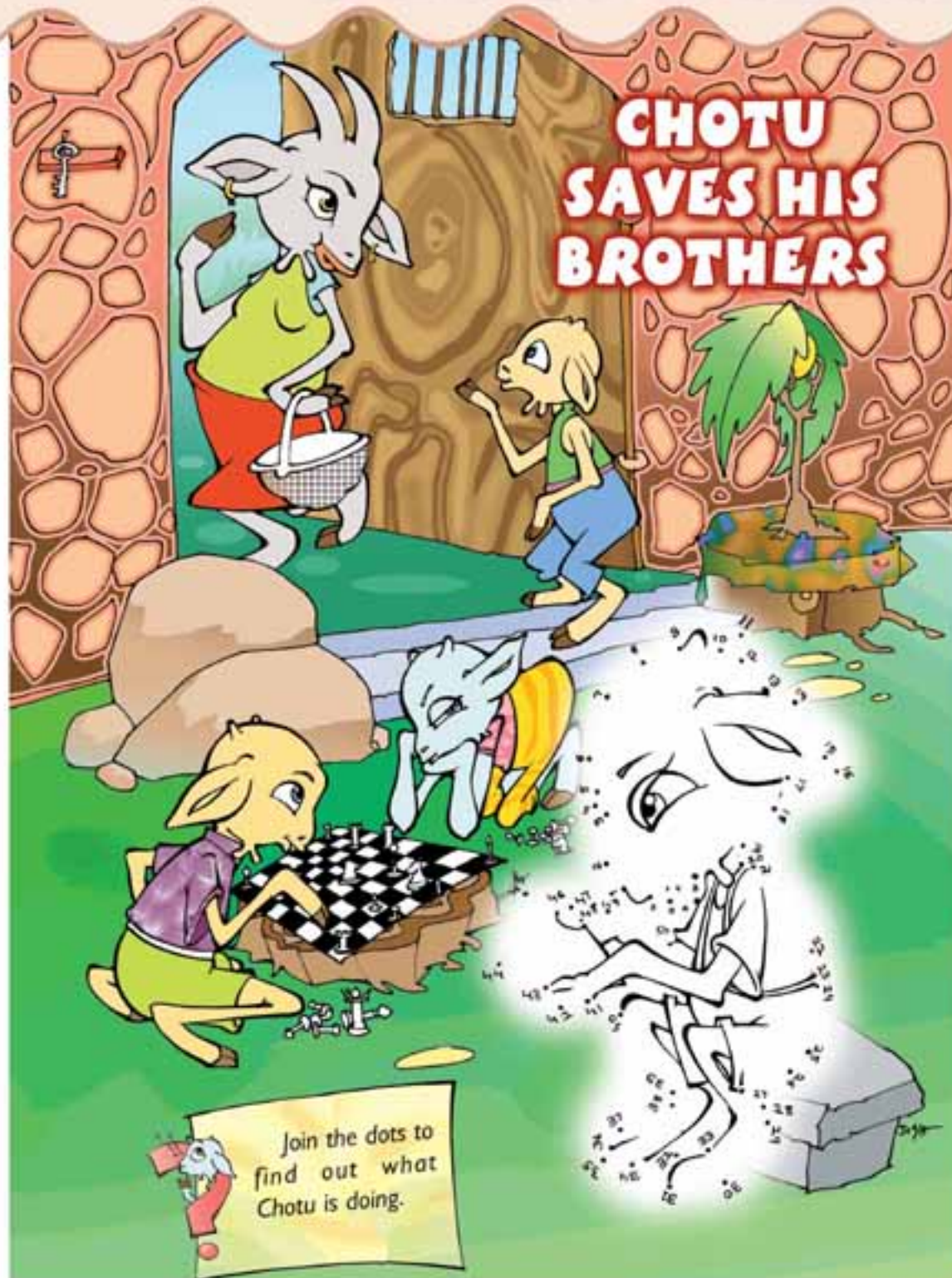


JUNIOR CHANDAMAMA



CHOTU SAVES HIS BROTHERS

Ganga Goat lived in a forest with her four kids. The youngest of them, Chotu, was also the most clever. She went to the forest every day to get food for them. "Be careful, my children. Do not open the door to any strangers," she would warn them before leaving.



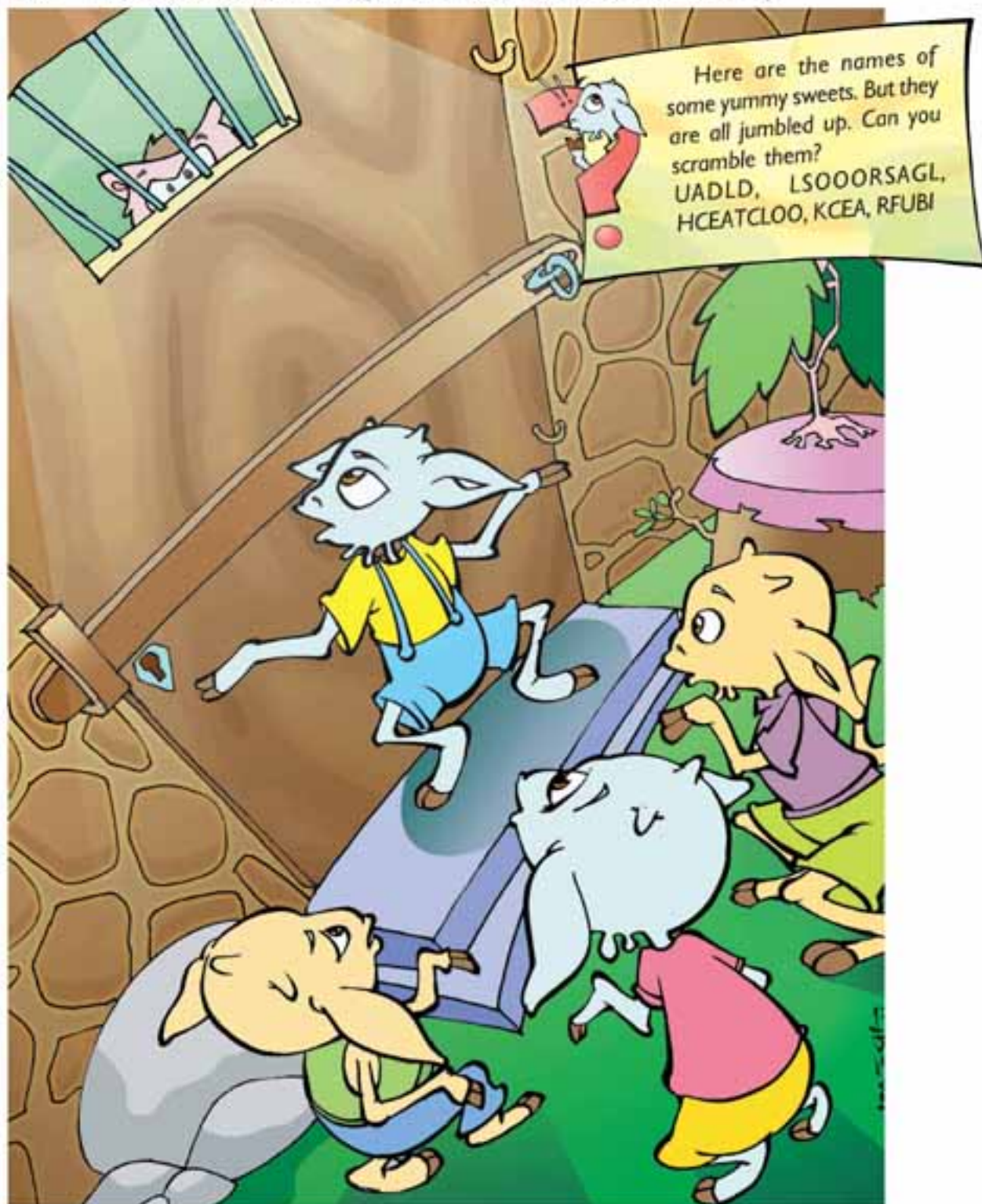
One day when Ganga was returning home, the wicked Fixim Fox followed her. He peeped into her house. 'Wow! Four fat kids! I'll eat them up tomorrow after Ganga leaves the house,' he thought.

Ganga saw Fixim. She warned her children, "Fixim has seen you. He is a cunning fellow. He will try to catch you. You must be more careful than ever from tomorrow."



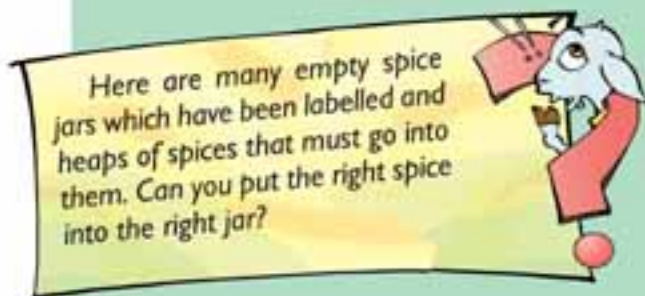
The next day after Ganga had left, Fixim went to her house. "Open the door, dear children. I'm your mummy. I've got some yummy sweets for you!" he cried. "Mummy has brought sweets!" said the three older kids and they ran to the door.

But Chotu stopped them. "You're not Mummy," he shouted to the fox. "Your voice is too rough, not soft like her's! Go away!"



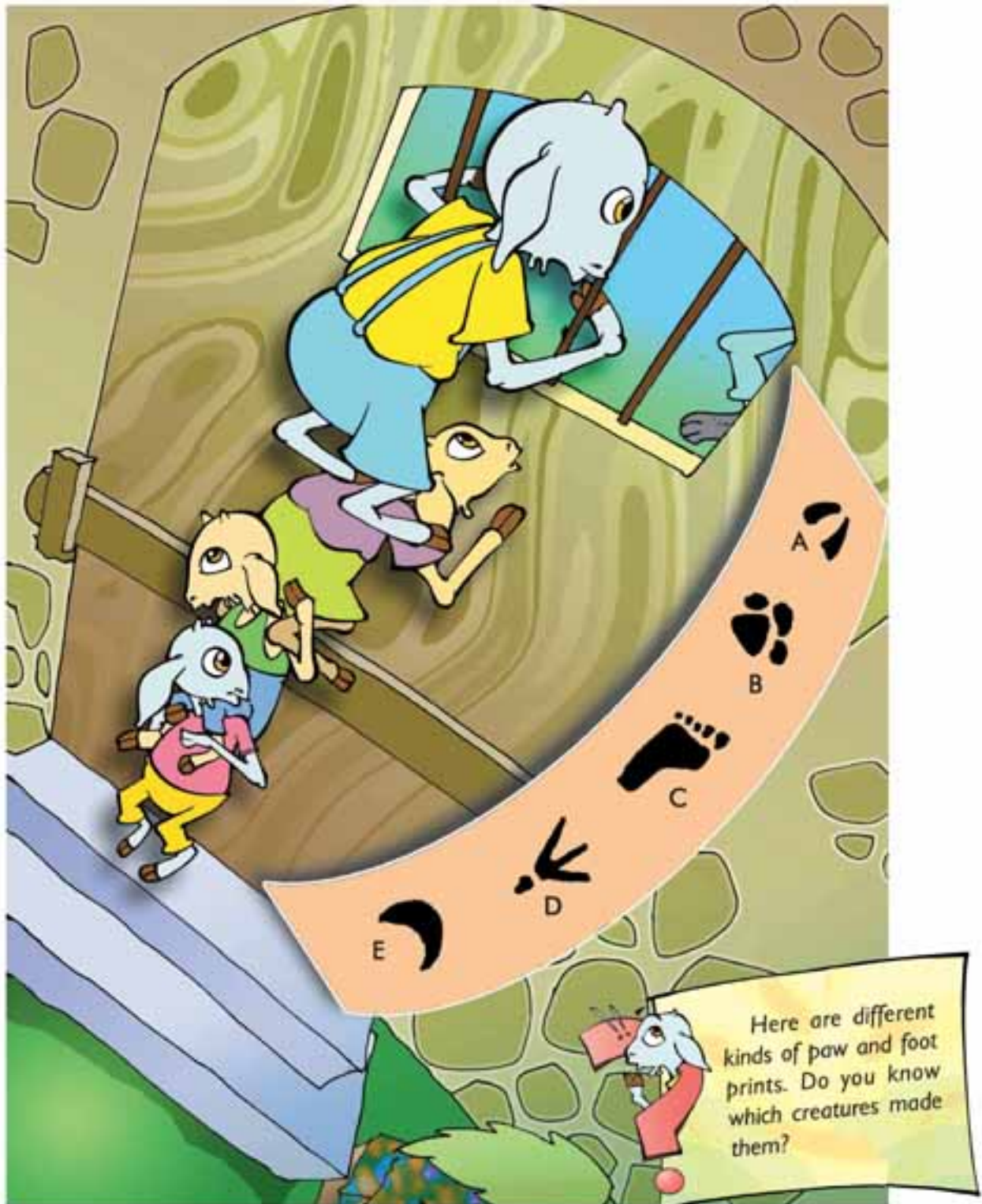
Fixim wanted to make his voice soft. He went to the village and bought some pepper and milk. He crushed the pepper, added it to the milk, then boiled and drank it up. This made his voice soft. He went back to Ganga's house.

"I'm your mummy! Open the door!" he cried sweetly. The older kids rushed to the door. But Chotu pulled them back.



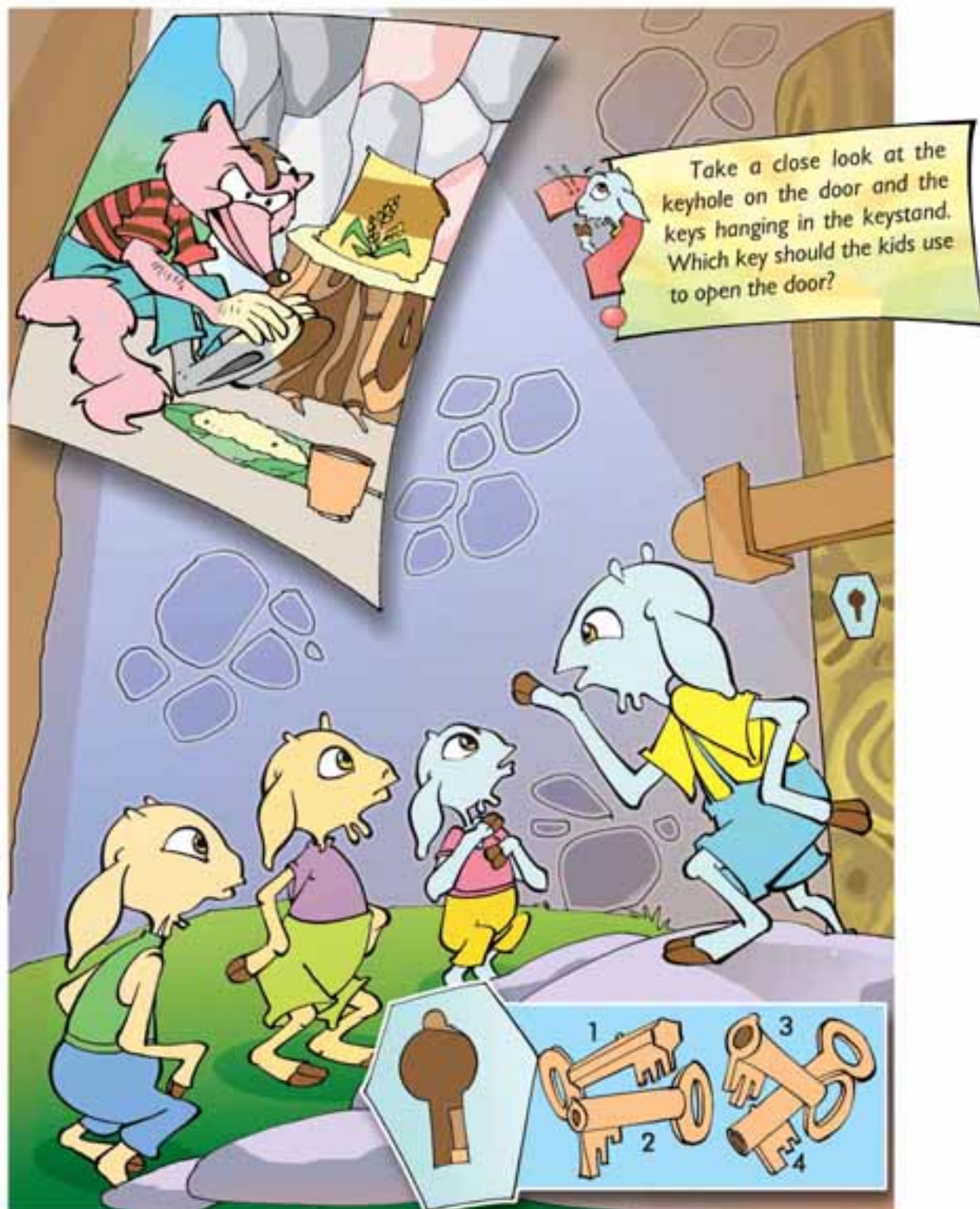
Chotu made his brothers stand one on top of the other. Then he climbed to the very top and peeped out of the little window high on the wall. He could just see the fox's paws now.

"Your paw is black, not white like our mummy's. You're not our mother. Go away," said Chotu. Fixim ran away, angrily.



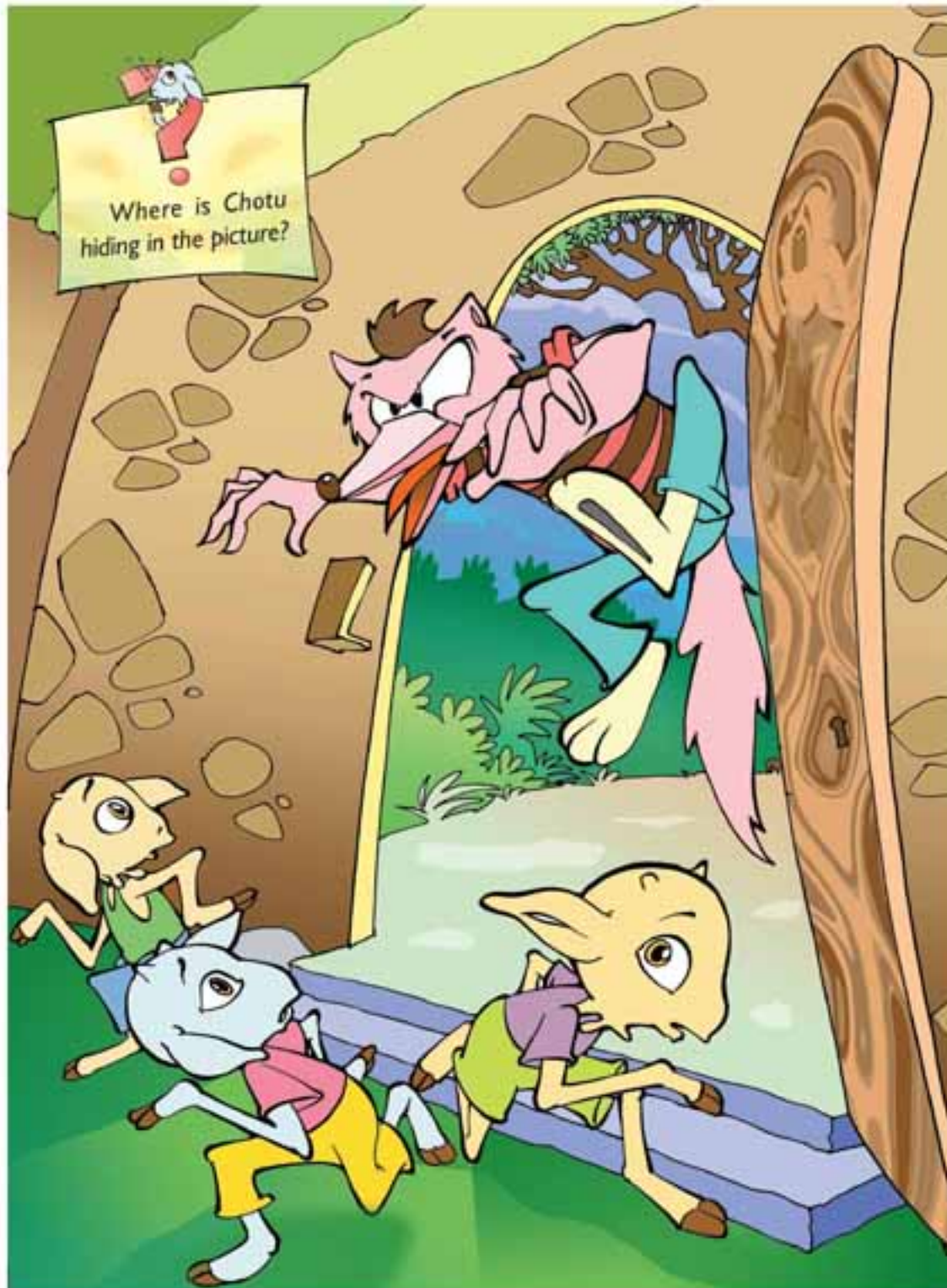
Fixim bought some flour from the shop. He mixed it with water and pasted it all over his paws. Now his paws were white. He went back to Ganga's house and asked the kids to open the door.

When Chotu peeped out of the window this time, he saw white paws. "It looks like mummy, but I'm not sure. That fox might be playing a trick on us again!" he told his brothers.



"Oh no, Chotu! It is surely Mummy this time! The fox has run away!" cried his brothers.

They opened the door but Chotu hid himself. Fixim pounced on the three kids. He gobbled them up. Just then Ganga came there. Before she could stop him, he ran away.





Chotu came out and told Ganga everything. Ganga and her brother, Darji Goat, went searching for Fixim. They found him under a tree, fast asleep. Darji cut Fixim's stomach. The three kids bounced out of it happily. Then Darji stitched the fox's tummy back and all the goats went back singing with joy.

Look at the many things given here. Most of them are useful to a tailor but some are not. Pick out the ones that the tailor would not use.

ANSWERS

Page-6 : Key No.4.
Page-7 : Look at the door!
Page-8 : top, pliers, hammer,
Vernier callipers.

Page-2 : herbivores-jackal, carnivores-zebra, goat.
Page-3 : laddu, rossogolla, chocolate, cake, burfi.
Page-4 : 1-clove, 2-chilli, 3-pepper, 4-elaichi, 5-leera.
Page-5 : A-goat, B-cat, C-human, D-cock, E-horse.

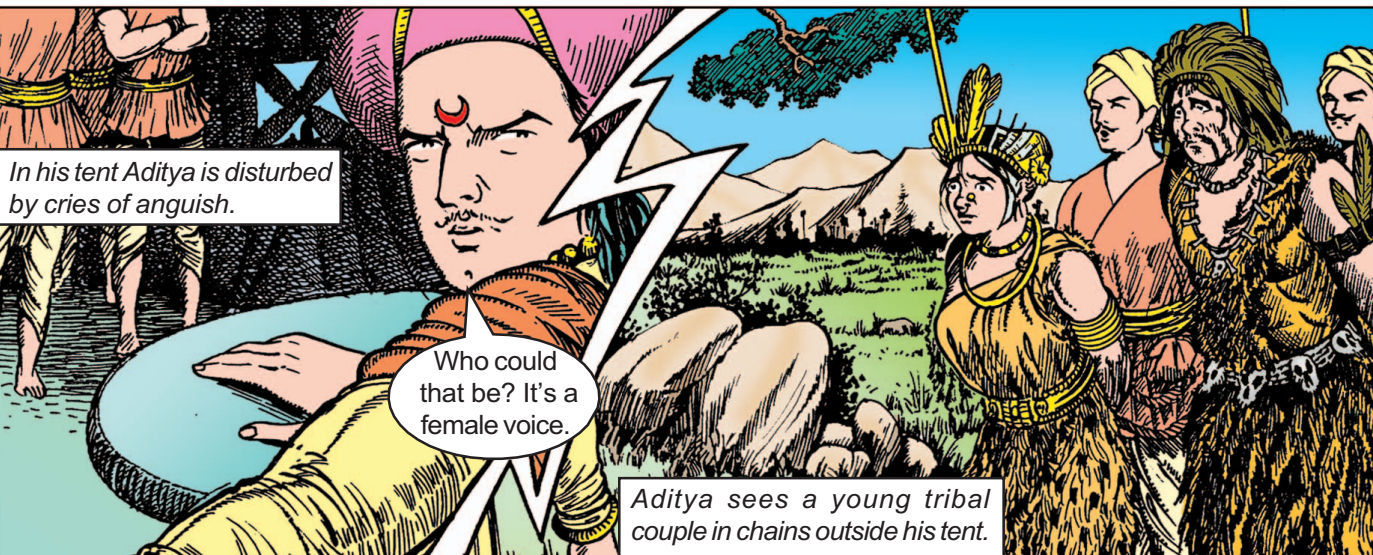
Garuda the Invincible

21

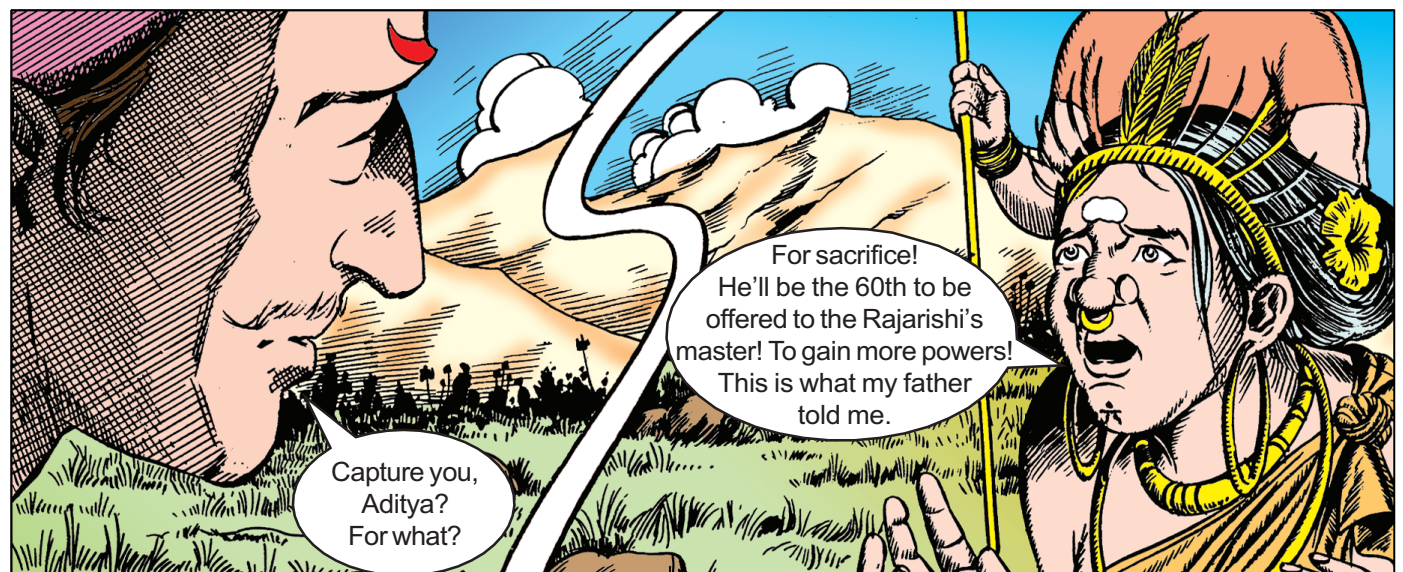
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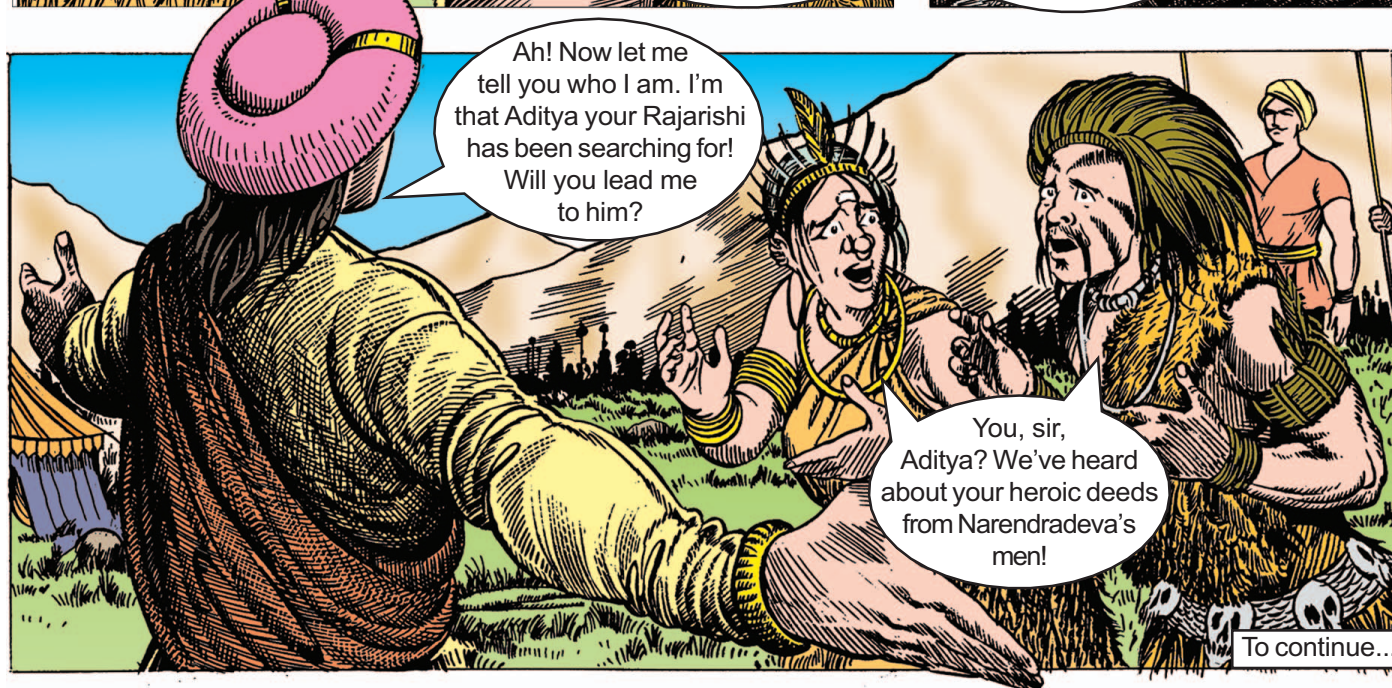
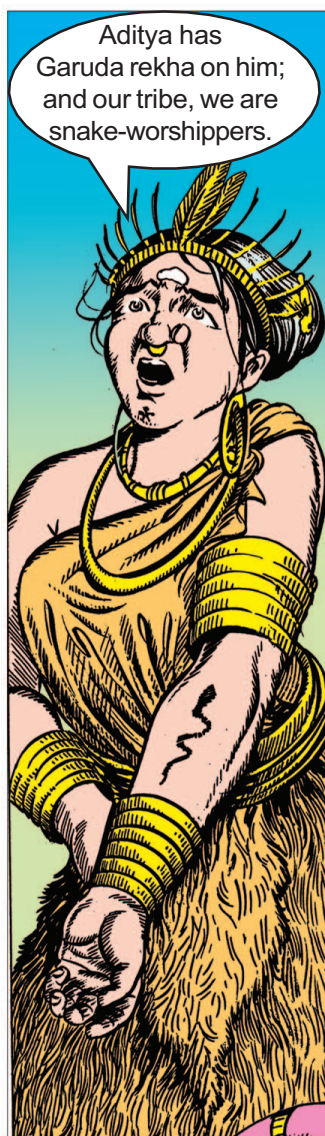
With Commander Narendradeva and son Ravindradeva as his guests, the Tantrik Rajarishi Nagabandhu invokes the help of Pashankara, a strange-looking figure, to capture Aditya and bring him to the cave temple in Sarpadesa. He finds Aditya more than a match. He goes back to the Tantrik and confesses his failure. King Mahendravarma declares Narendradeva and Ravindradeva as traitors. Aditya gets ready to leave for Sarpadesa.

On reaching Sarpadesa, the men accompanying Aditya put up tents for their stay. He sends one group to survey the valley.









NEWS FLASH

Doggie dessert



If you are contemplating a visit to Japan, look for ice-cream made by Akagi Neugo. The company has developed a variety specially for—take a breath—dogs! It has no brand name, but the cup will say “Doggie’s Ice-cream.” The common ice-cream contains lactose which dogs cannot easily digest. The Japanese variety has no lactose. The company, however, assures that Doggie’s Ice-cream can safely be eaten by humans, too. As this variety is not that sweet, it can be eaten by diabetics as well. However, people may shy away from tasting the ice-cream. Because, a cup containing 3.3 oz of ice-cream costs 15 dollars (nearly Rs.750)!

World's best job

A prominent departmental store in London’s exclusive Piccadilly recently advertised a vacancy for a job that will fetch £ 35,000 a year as salary. The nature of the job: **to taste chocolate!** The incumbent will be expected to taste different varieties of chocolate and on his or her advice will the store make the



purchases. The employee—designated as “chocolate buyer”—will travel round the world to taste chocolate. The store does not want to leave any stone unturned (or any bar of chocolate un-licked) as it wishes to offer only the best to its customers. The advertisement appearing in London’s newspapers carried this slogan: “The best job in the world”. Any takers?

Feline visitors

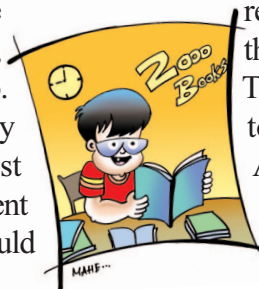
A hotel in Rio de Janeiro, capital of Brazil, gets customers who invariably reserve tables in advance. Travellers passing by also drop in for a quick bite and a drink. On a day in August, however, the hotel had two unexpected visitors. On seeing them enter and wander among the tables, the customers and the maids in the hotel got panicky and began screaming. That did not excite the visitors for some time. Later, they protested and broke a glass door and lifted the table covers toppling the chinaware on them. By then, the hotel manager had alerted the local environmental agency, whose volunteers managed to entice them to enter the cages they had brought. The visitors were jaguars!



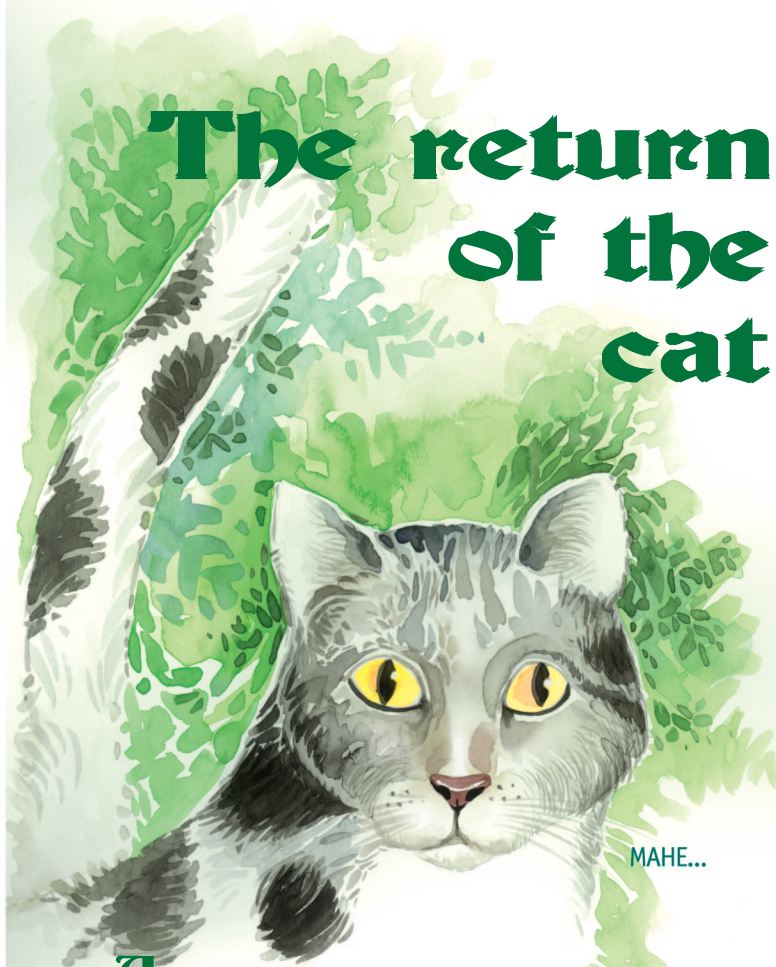
No arm-chair travel this

Sixth-standard student Johnny Jose, son of Kerala-born parents settled in London, has just returned from a visit to the Disneyland in California, USA. The visit was made possible by *The Times*, London, which announced a competition two years ago. Twelve-year-old Johnny won the contest by reading 2,000 books in two years. The contest had not specified any activity; the advertisement had merely stipulated that the participants should

engage themselves in some extraordinary but useful activity. And Johnny chose reading books. He not only read them but maintained a complete record of the books that he read. He avoided watching the TV those two years. During holidays, he managed to read even up to 10 books on certain days. After selecting the winner, the newspaper gave air-tickets to Johnny and his two brothers, as well as their parents to go to the USA.



The return of the cat



Anita had a cat named Chessboard. She was so named after her black and white patches of fur. Indeed Chessboard looked lovely and resembled a fur ball. Her eyes were a beautiful olive green and very expressive.

Chessboard first wandered into Anita's apartment a few years ago. Her younger brother Sarwan wanted to name the black-and-white kitten, Panda, because of the feline's remarkable similarity to a panda. Nevertheless, Anita had a strange logic for not liking the name: pandas are 'vegetarian' and ate only bamboo shoots, while cats ate fish as well! Sister and brother constantly bickered over the name. Finally, Anita bought a pack of World Wrestling Federation cards (trump cards!) for her younger brother in turn for agreeing to the name Chessboard. Anita also got Sarwan's promise that he would not go back on his word. However, just like all younger brothers, Sarwan continued to quarrel over the name until his interest shifted to other fleeting things of childhood.

So, Chessboard was how everybody referred to the kitten. Anita began to love Chessboard. She would come back from school and fondle Chessboard, and the cat would roll on her back and purr softly. Chessboard loved

all the attention. She loved the way Anita tenderly placed a bowl of warm milk and lapped it all up with glee. Then she would curl up on Anita's lap and doze off.

Chessboard grew into a gorgeous-looking strong cat. She would sleep during the day and go out in the night. This nocturnal pursuit earned her many friends. Her behaviour also became more adult-like.

Chessboard was able to take care of herself. She would challenge any other animal that dared enter her territory. In fact, with Anita offering good food and care, Chessboard grew to be the biggest cat in her locality. Her size made even dogs skeptical of indulging in any aggression.

One day Chessboard's tummy began to swell making Anita very concerned. People told Anita that Chessboard would soon give birth to a kitten. In fact, she gave birth to three kittens. Although Anita was thrilled initially, tending to three more boisterous and playful kittens became painful. And since they lived on the second floor of the apartment, more trouble was brewing.

An apartment is not an ideal place for keeping pets, as animals use the floor for their toilet. Kittens cannot go out on their own until they are mature enough and often get into other houses in apartments. Not all people tolerate the uninvited presence of animals.

People started complaining to Anita of the nuisance that Chessboard had become. When the kittens grew up, Anita took them and left them in the nearby park. She, however, felt guilty for having separated mother and children. A few months later Chessboard again became pregnant and the whole ordeal repeated itself. This time the people were more demeaning. They abused Anita and asked her to take away Chessboard or else face the consequences. They also complained that cats can cause asthma. But how could Anita cede to the general opinion? After all, she loved Chessboard dearly.

One wintry day, Anita returned home from school and called out to Chessboard. But there was no response. Although she searched everywhere, Chessboard was not to be found. She waited for a couple of days more, but when Chessboard did not return, Anita became very anxious. She had just found a solution to the nuisance Chessboard was causing. A friend whose father was a veterinarian had told Anita that it was possible to prevent

a cat from giving birth. Anita was relieved that she did not have to part with Chessboard. But now Chessboard had disappeared!

Anita was sure that someone had taken away the cat. However, the people of her apartment had more important things on their mind than a cat's whereabouts and they rebuked Anita.

Thinking of her Chessboard all the while, Anita became sick. She lost interest in her studies and did not even eat properly. Her parents and Sarwan were worried but could do nothing. They searched for Chessboard but she was not to be found.

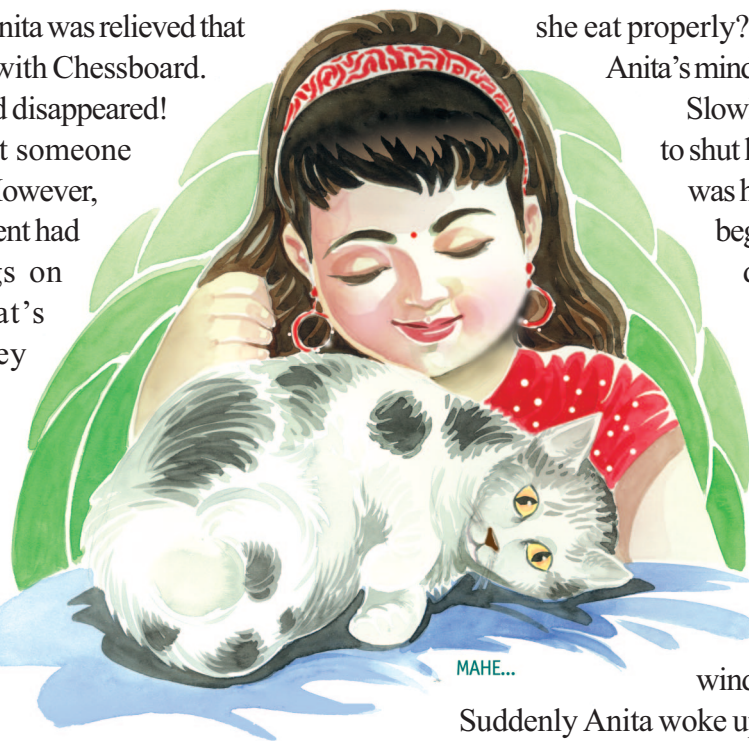
One day a feverish, pale, and weak Anita lay on the bed praying that nothing should befall her beloved Chessboard. Her imagination ran wild and she thought of mad dogs and people chasing away her. Who would feed and shelter Chessboard? Was she still alive? Did

she eat properly? These questions plagued Anita's mind.

Slowly she grew tired and began to shut her eyes. Outside, the wind was howling and droplets of rain began to fall. The hooks on the doors and windows began to shake and make infrequent noises, and sleep slowly crept over Anita. Suddenly, in her subconscious mind she heard a feeble cry. It was more like a scratching on the door. Was Anita imagining it or was it the wind making such noises?

Suddenly Anita woke up. The sound was that of a cat scratching the door! With unfathomable glee, Anita opened the door to see her beloved Chessboard. She had thinned down considerably and looked dirty. Anyway, she had somehow managed to come back. Anita picked her up and hugged her in joy. Chessboard purred in her lap.

- By Giridharan Jagannathan



MAHE...



How do you get a mouse to fly?



How can you quickly double your currency notes?



How does the sea greet the shore every morning?



What's the best thing to put into a sponge cake?



With what can you record a monkey's voice?

It waves



Fold them!



Buy it an airline ticket



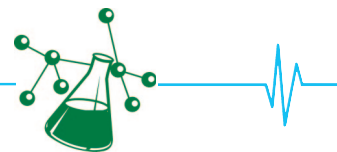
An ape recorder



Your teeth



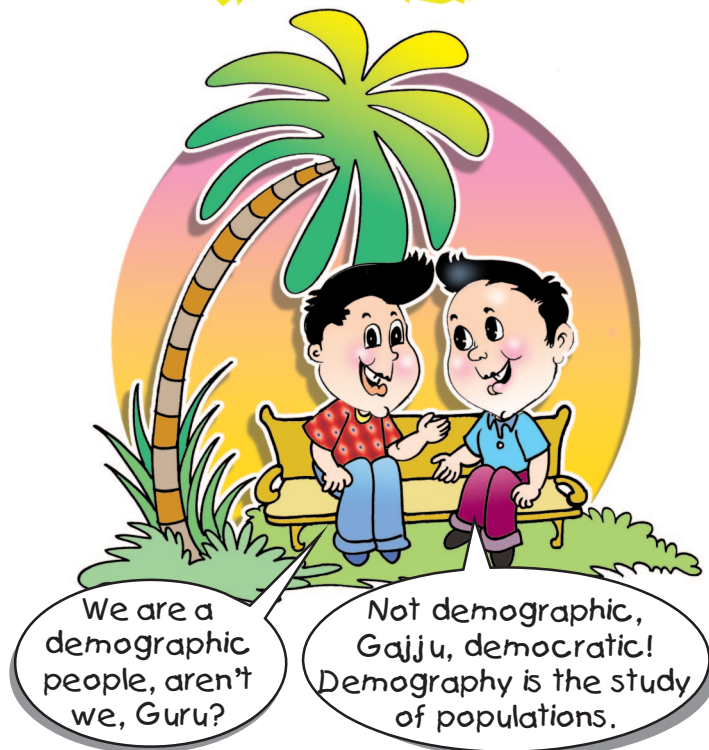
Answers :



Demography

Demography helps one to understand human society. The main task of a demographer is to ascertain the number of individuals in an area, observe the variation from the previous census and to find the reasons for the change. Demographers compile and analyse data that helps in understanding the social system of the area. This in turn helps in determining public policy, like housing, education, and employment.

Initially demography was considered as the study of human population in a certain geographical area. But now-a-days it also includes the study of the flora and fauna in any particular region.



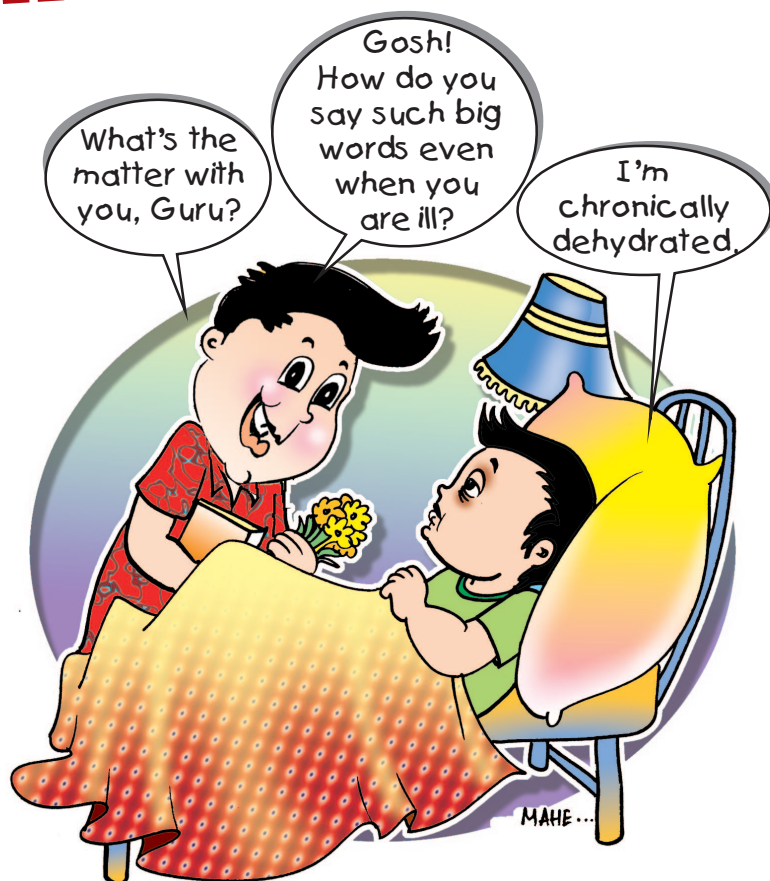
Dehydration

When anything loses too much of its water content, it is said to be dehydrated. Our body tissues require a certain amount of water. Once a person becomes too warm as in fever, much of the moisture in the body is lost. When the water content reaches an abnormally low level, it leads to illness and, sometimes, even death.

Frequent vomiting or passing of stools often lead to dehydration.

Dehydration can be overcome by taking oral rehydration salts — a mixture of various essential salts and sugars dissolved in water.

Food items are dehydrated to increase their shelf life. When the water content in an item is very low, bacteria and other small organisms that cause decay, cannot multiply.

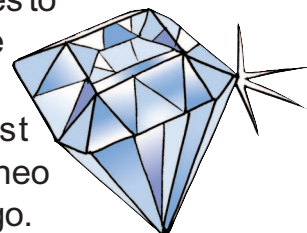




Diamonds

Diamonds are a natural and crystallised form of carbon, created under great heat and pressure. They are also the hardest mineral known and the only gemstones to be composed of a single element.

Diamonds were first discovered in India and Borneo nearly two thousand years ago.



The source of diamonds is an igneous rock called kimberlite. Diamonds extracted from it under four processes – cleaving, bruting, sawing, polishing – before the gem is ready for use. Cleaving improves the shape of the stones, which have a naturally irregular shape. Sawing is preliminary shaping, while bruting is

the rounding process done before polishing. The gems are given various cuts such as the brilliant-cut, emerald, oval, pear, and marquise cut in this stage. Polishing is an art and has traditionally been done by individuals. It could take months to polish a huge diamond. Diamonds are not affected by chemicals. Only temperatures of 900° C and above affect them.

Diamonds are used not only for jewellery but for cutting, grinding, or boring into hard metals and other hard substances, and as watch bearings and cutting tools. Did you know that only a diamond can cut another diamond? Diamonds are measured in carats.

Activity

Here are theories proposed by several scientists, whose names start with 'D'. Can you identify them?

1. Atomic theory is based on his work. He developed the theory of chemical atoms and published the first list of atomic weights of elements.
2. The theory of organic evolution was proposed by him. He also wrote two books, 'The Origin of the Species' and 'The Descent of Man'.
3. He invented the first modern vacuum tube. He obtained patents for nearly three

hundred inventions, mostly pertaining to sound pictures and television.

4. He invented the vacuum-insulated flask or the thermos bottle. He was a pioneer in low temperature research.
5. He was an engineer who perfected the type of internal combustion engine. It is named after him.

1. Dalton, John 2. Darwin, Charles Robert 3. DeForest, Lee 4. Dewar, Sir James 5. Diesel, Rudolf

Answers :

Long, long ago, in a small village called Sonpur lived a young man named Ram Prasad. An orphan since his teens, he eked out a living by tilling his small plot of land. He was happy and contented with his meagre earnings. As he grew up, he was noted for his intelligence, maturity, and wisdom. The villagers used to approach him to mediate in their disputes, and invariably they accepted his decisions.

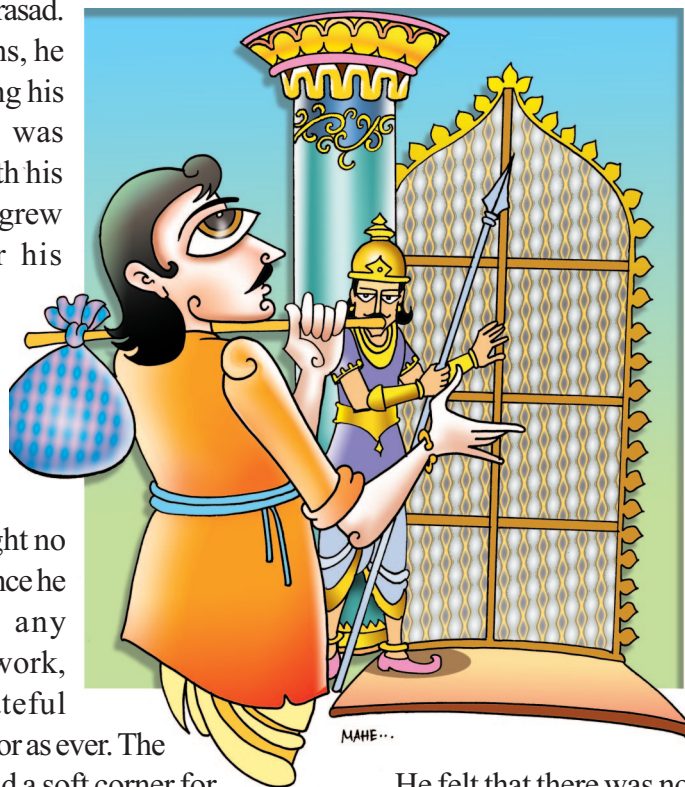
However, this brought no difference in his status. Since he did not receive any remuneration for his work, except gifts from grateful parties, he remained as poor as ever. The village headman, who had a soft corner for him, suggested that he should approach the king for a job at the court. The king was certain to recognise his capabilities and give him a job he deserved. His talents were being wasted in that tiny village.

The idea appealed to Ram Prasad. He started getting ready to leave for the capital. As soon as he had collected some money by selling off his house and land, he set off on his mission. After a long journey, he reached the capital. Footsore and weary, he located an inn where he refreshed himself and found out where the palace was. Then, not wanting to waste even a minute, he presented himself there.

But very soon, Ram Prasad realised that it was not as easy to reach the king as he had supposed. The guards would not let him meet the king. Finally, with great difficulty he managed to meet the prime minister.

The meeting was less than encouraging. The latter had neither the time nor the patience for him, and soon sent him packing. Though shaken, Ram Prasad was undaunted. Resolving to stay till he could find some contacts to establish himself in the court, he returned to the inn to plan his strategy.

The Judgement



A discussion with the innkeeper yielded results. Having obtained the names of two courtiers through whom he could approach the king, he stepped up his efforts in that direction. But very soon he realised that it was a fruitless exercise. The courtiers were not interested in promoting him.

By then he had made some more contacts in the city. He kept trying but to no avail. Soon six months had gone by. The money he had when he left his village was exhausted and he was no closer to meeting the king than he was on the first day. Ram Prasad was thoroughly disillusioned.

He felt that there was no point in staying on in the city. Nor could he go back to his village, now that he had disposed of his property there. All avenues before him were closed. In frustration, he decided to renounce the world.

There was a forest not far from the capital. He went there and started walking aimlessly. Soon he came to a clearing with a brook running through it. He liked the area and decided to make his abode there.

After cleaning up the area, he started building a small hut there. Soon it was ready, and he took up residence. He lived on fruits and roots which he collected, and spent his spare time in prayer. Many days passed in this way.

Months later, the king came to the forest on a hunting expedition. Unexpectedly there was a thunderstorm. The king lost his way and was separated from his entourage. Chance brought him to the clearing where Ram Prasad's hut stood. Seeing his plight, Ram Prasad welcomed him in and gave him food and dry clothes. He assured him that he would show him the way out of the forest after the rain had stopped.

The king felt deeply grateful. He revealed his identity to a much astonished Ram Prasad and asked him how

he came to be living in the forest. Ram Prasad then told him the whole story. The king listened to him and at the end said, "Come and meet me in the court tomorrow morning. I shall instruct the palace guards to let you in." By then the rain had stopped, and he took the way Ram Prasad showed him.

The next morning Ram Prasad presented himself at the palace. This time he had no difficulty getting entry. He was led straight to the king, who bade him welcome and offered him a seat next to his. The king then ordered for the cases on trial to begin.

Two men were brought in. The king said, "State your case."

The first man bowed and said, "Your majesty, my name is Shyamlal. This man, Chatursen, is my neighbour. He had a well on his land, from which he never allowed me to draw water. So, finally I bought the well from him for five thousand rupees. But now, this man is not letting me take the water from the well! His claim is that he had sold me only the well, not the water in it. So if I want water, I have to pay him a rupee for each pot I draw! Isn't this injustice of the worst order?"

The case was intriguing. The king scratched his chin, looked at Chatursen and asked, "What have you to say?"

Chatursen said, "Your majesty may kindly see the sale deed for the well. It only transfers the ownership of the well itself—nowhere is the water mentioned."

Turning to Ram Prasad, the king said, "Here's your chance to prove your ability. Let me see how you judge the case."

Calmly Ram Prasad accepted the challenge. He took the sale deed and studied it. Finally he turned to Chatursen. "You're right," he said. "The water in the well is yours." Chatursen smiled smugly.

"So," continued Ram Prasad, "you've no right to keep your water in Shyamlal's well. Therefore, you must either take it all out immediately, or else pay him a regular monthly rent for housing your water."

The judgement left Chatursen crestfallen. Shyamlal was jubilant and loudly praised the judge. The king was so pleased that he got up from his throne, embraced Ram Prasad, and slipped his own diamond ring on to his finger. He then announced — "I've no more

doubt about your wisdom, Ram Prasad. Here and now I appoint you as my royal advisor!"

Ram Prasad had finally got the recognition he deserved. From then on, he served the king as a worthy advisor and was richly rewarded. **- By Rajee Raman**



Instead of waiting
for someone to
bring you flowers,
why not plant
your own garden?

- Unknown



Kind words can be
short and easy
to speak,
but their echoes
are truly endless.

- Mother Teresa





Send your questions to :
Ask Away, Chandamama India Ltd.
No.82 Defence Officers Colony
Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097 or
e-mail to askaway@chandamama.org.

Q *My mother told me about the Varaha avatar of Lord Vishnu. According to that myth, our planet earth was stolen by a Danava and was hidden under the sea. Which sea was that and what happened to the living beings on the earth?*

- N. Gopal Singh, Cuddapah

A Myths are parables and allegories, having only a symbolic meaning. They are not to be understood in a literal sense, as we understand events and episodes in history.

Since the creation of our earth, a struggle has been going on between the good and the evil or between the forces of light and those of darkness. While the gods represent the good, the Danavas or the demons represent the evil.

According to the myth you refer to, Hiranyaksha, an immensely powerful demon, hid the earth in the sea. Here, the sea stands for the infinite creative force, without any form or shape. The earth had emerged out of this creative force. The earth held great promises of life and its progress from the darkness of unconsciousness to the light of consciousness.

The demons hated this kind of progress. They wanted the earth to remain ever unconscious and ignorant, so that they could have their mastery over it. Hiranyaksha hiding the earth in the sea, means things were back to square one.

Varaha was a mighty Divine Power that foiled the demon's mischief and retrieved the earth. That is to say, the process of progress on our earth began once again.

This myth belongs to a very remote past. We do not know about the varieties of beings then inhabiting the earth. Obviously they were not affected physically, because the earth could not have been drowned.

Q *We are often reminded that India was once a great country. Can we get back that greatness once again?*

- Sujata Mishra, Kolkata

A Your question implies that India has fallen from her greatness. If India was once great, it was the people who had made it great. If the people will it, India can become great once again. We have developed the bad habit of shutting our eyes towards our own defects and locating the causes of our fall in others. The other day a highly educated person told me how a certain officer had demanded a bribe from him and he was obliged to give. Naturally he was very critical of the bribe-taker, but was the least bothered about the bribe-giver, that is, himself.

That reminds me of a story: once a lady complained to a psychiatrist that her husband suffered from a delusion; he thought himself to be the monarch of Shangrila. The psychiatrist treated him and he was cured. A year later the gentleman complained to the psychiatrist that his wife suffered from awful depression. The psychiatrist found out that when the gentleman thought himself to be a monarch, he was addressing the lady as Her Royal Highness and bringing her gifts befitting a queen. After he became normal, the lady missed all those flattering words and gifts. That depressed her. In other words, she used to lend a sort of unconscious support to her husband's delusion.

But we the people lend not an unconscious, but very conscious support to those who go astray and then find fault with them.

For you and for me, the only way to contribute to the greatness of the country is to act without greed and fear—each one individually. Let us love our country and act in such a way that the world would say—India is a land of noble people. That would be the true greatness.

Dear eco friends,



Are the taps still running in your houses? Or is there no more water? Has your newspaper talked of poor monsoon, water scarcity and drought? Well, we could do our

bit to save water, right? It's easy. This month, we give you some simple suggestions for water conservation. You could easily adopt them at your homes and schools, and encourage your pals to do likewise.

We were thrilled to receive many letters and contest entries for Chandamama in used envelopes that had been turned inside out. Looks like you have taken to our activities in real earnest. Good for you, friends. Do keep it up!

Love

KOPRA KUTTY

- Take water in a tumbler or mug to rinse your mouth after brushing the teeth, or for washing your face or hands. Do not let the tap run while you soap your hands or face.
- A shower is a waste of good water. You need just a bucket of water for a good bath.



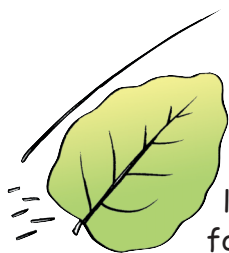
Conserve water

- Do not use a hose to water your garden or wash a car. Use a bucket of water instead and watch how your water consumption is reduced.
- Wash vegetables and fruits in a bowl of water and use this water for your plants.
- Avoid using a washing machine during times of water scarcity.
- When it rains, catch the rainwater in tubs and buckets and use it for cleaning purposes.

Making leaf plates

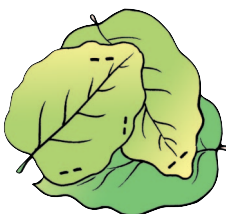
Planning to throw a party? Make it an eco-friendly one! Shun paper plates, paper napkins, and plastic cups or tumblers. Use metal plates and tumblers and cloth napkins instead. Still better, use plates made of leaves.

Would you like to learn how to make a leaf plate?



Look out for trees with broad leaves such as the badam, the peepal or the jackfruit. Pluck three badam leaves. Place the leaves in such a manner that they form a triangular shape. See that the leaf nodes point outwards.

Use the thin spine of a coconut frond to pin the leaves together. Make sure that there isn't any gap between the leaves, or your sambar or sauce might drip through. If



you are using peepal or jackfruit leaves, you may need five or six for a plate. Put the broadest leaf in the middle and pin the other leaves around it.

If you think this is a novel idea, you are wrong. Our great grandparents and great great grandparents used only these plates to eat their meals. It's time we rediscovered these biodegradable 'use and throw' plates and banish the plastic demon from Planet Earth! Make sure that the leaves you use are not poisonous ones.



Women who made history

Krishna Kumari

Udaipur, a kingdom in Rajasthan with a glorious past, was being ruled by Maharana Bhim Singh.

If Udaipur was a lovely city, Princess Krishna Kumari was hailed by everybody as a lovely maiden.



One day, a messenger from Jagat Singh, the ruler of Jaipur, called on the Maharana.

Unfortunately, Jaipur was attacked by Man Singh, ruler of Marwar, who went about claiming that he had defeated Jagat Singh. They became enemies.



Now Man Singh also sent a messenger to Maharana Bhim Singh.

The Maharana and his queen were in a dilemma. Udaipur could not afford to antagonise either Jagat Singh or Man Singh. Also Udaipur was unprepared to offer any resistance if there was to be an attack.



Nawab Amir Khan, a close friend of Man Singh, made use of every opportunity to prompt him to demand the hand of Krishna Kumari. He was almost under the spell of the Nawab.



When the messengers sent by Man Singh came back without a firm reply from the Maharana, the Nawab offered to go to Udaipur himself.



The princess was distraught when she was told about the threat on Udaipur.

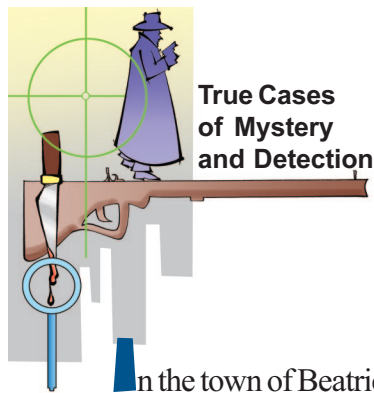
Both Jagat Singh and Man Singh plotted to abduct the princess. There was panic among the people. The Maharana decided to save the city.



It was a sleepless night for the princess. Suddenly, she saw a figure approaching her bed. As he came near, she recognised him.

The princess guessed that her father had decided to sacrifice her to save the city by detailing his cousin Jawandas to end her life. At her command her maids brought poison.





STRANGE COINCIDENCES

In the town of Beatrice in Nebraska, USA, almost half a century ago there stood a beautiful little church, where a choir group regularly held its practice sessions. All the musicians were in the habit of being very punctual.

But on March 1, 1950, something bizarre happened!

The clergyman, Walter Klempel, as usual went to the church in the afternoon to get things ready for the evening practice. He lit the fireplace, for it usually became very chilly and cold by the time the musicians arrived by 7.15 p.m. He then went home for dinner.

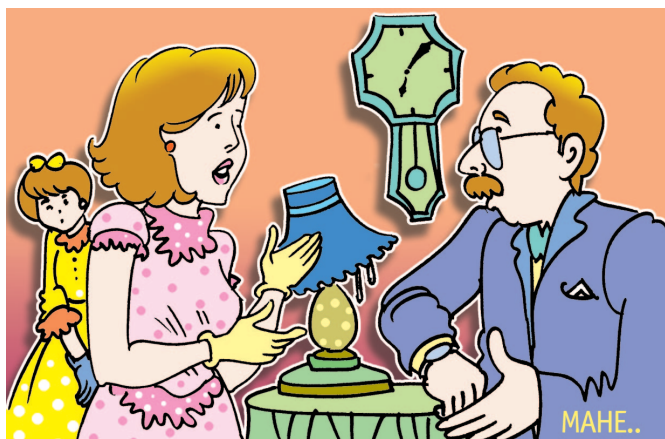
At 7.10 p.m. he was about to go back to the church with his wife and daughter, but could not do so. For, his



pianist, was late simply because her daughter could not get ready on time despite her efforts to wake her up. So both mother and daughter were still indoors when there occurred something most abnormal.

It was a very cold evening. Joyce Black, the stenographer, just felt lethargic. She lazed about in the warmth of her little home till the very last minute. But when she did get ready to leave for the choir, something unexpected had already taken place.

Ladona Vandegrift, a high-school girl, was engrossed in a geometry problem. She knew that the choir practice usually began sharp at 7.15 p.m. She always made it a point to reach much earlier. But that day she just stayed back to solve her geometry problem.



wife's dress looked crumpled and she was unwilling to go without ironing it again. So they were late for the choir and were still at home when something unusual took place.

Harvey Ahl, a machinist by profession, was taking care of his two sons, as his wife was away. But that day, most unusually he entered into an interesting conversation with his friend. When he realized and looked at his watch, it was already late, well past 7.15 p.m.

Marilyn Paul, the pianist, had in fact decided to reach half-an-hour early that day for the practice. But after her evening meal, however, she went for a nap and fell asleep. At quarter past seven when her mother woke her up, it was already too late to freshen up and reach on time.

The choir director, Mrs. F. E. Paul, mother of the





Sadie and Royena Estes were ready on time. But their car would not start. So, they called Ladona Vandegrift and requested her to give them a lift. But Ladona was busy solving her geometry problem. The Estes sisters, therefore, had to wait. They were still waiting when something extraordinary happened in their town.

Lucille Johnes and Dorothy Wood were both classmates and neighbours. They usually accompanied each other to the choir practice. But Lucille was listening to an interesting radio programme that ran from 7 to 7.30 p.m. She spoilt her record of being prompt and punctual, because she wanted to listen to the programme till the end. So, Dorothy waited for her friend and she was still waiting when there took place in Beatrice something most surprising.

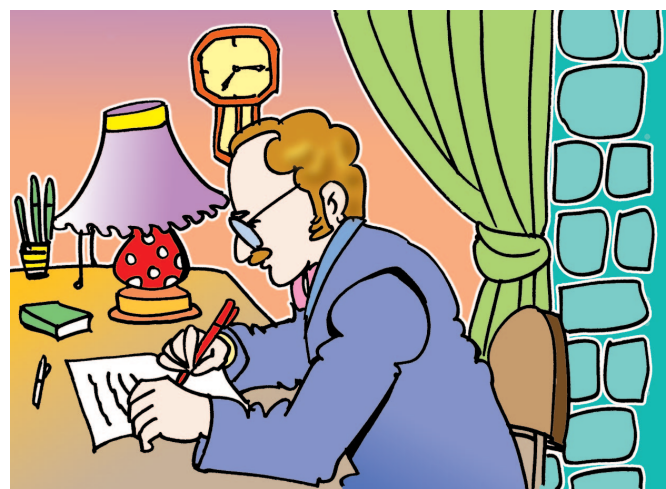
Mrs. Leonard Schuster and her little daughter would have arrived on time for the choir. But that particular evening she had to go to her old mother's place to help her get ready for an important meeting. She and her daughter had not yet reached the church when there happened something terrible and uncalled for.



The lathe operator, Herbert Kipf, usually arrived for the choir much before 7.15 p.m. But that day, he did not know why he sat writing an unfinished letter. He was still completing it when there occurred something most strange.

For, on that very day of March 1, 1950, the church, where the choir singing practice was to take place at 7.15 in the evening, blew up exactly ten minutes later, at 7.25 p.m. There was a tremendous blast that resounded all over the little town of Beatrice. Fireballs went spiralling up into the twilight sky. The walls collapsed and the heavy wooden roof crashed down to the floor.

Luckily, the church was empty! The members of the choir group, who were reputed to be always on time, were somehow late that evening, every one of them. They were all late because of such simple reasons as a radio



programme, a crumpled dress, an unfinished letter, a problem in geometry, a catnap, and a car that would not start. How could this happen? Did it happen just by chance? Were these reasons mere simple ones? Or were they the doings of some unknown power and force? It is a mystery!

But how did the church blow up? It is not known for sure, though some firemen later explained that the explosion could have been due to the natural gas which might have leaked into the church from a broken pipe outside and been ignited by the fire in the furnace.

Later, when the members of the choir group looked back and reflected on the sequence of events of their lives on that fateful evening, they were all filled with gratitude to the Lord. For they deeply believed that it was His miracle that had indeed saved their lives!

Do you, too, think so?

For the sake of his country

Kanishka frowned as he looked out of the window. Here was something he did not understand. He had never encountered disobedience in any form before. No one, NO ONE had ever dared to disobey the great Kushana emperor, loved and respected by all. People even called him Devaputra (son of god) whom no one could conquer. What, then, could be the matter with a mere tailor that he had dared to disobey the emperor's orders?

"You look troubled, your majesty," said one of his ministers. "Is anything wrong?"

"It's Nakul, the royal tailor," muttered Kanishka.

"What about him?" asked the minister, looking surprised. "I thought your majesty was satisfied with his work."

"I was. I liked the cloth the King of Kanauj had sent me as a gift. I asked Nakul to make a robe for me two days ago. And he hasn't appeared yet. Nor has he sent any message."

The minister looked at the emperor incredulously. He had never known anyone to disobey a direct command from royalty ... or take his own sweet time over doing it. If a mere tailor could behave so unconventionally, something serious must be amiss. The minister decided to look into it personally.

Emperor Kanishka was a household name in the country. It was he who had introduced the use of gold coins as currency in India. Having conquered many provinces far and wide, his empire now stretched from River Oxus to the Gangetic Plain; from Khorasan in Central Asia to Varanasi, comprising a major part of Asia. He had built the famous Kanishka Vihara, an impressive Buddhist monastery which was so magnificent that people from all over the world came down to see it. He was a great patron of art and literature. He had established the Saka era – a calendar followed by the rest of the country.



It was, therefore, only natural that his court should be filled with visitors every day. Many of them brought beautiful and expensive gifts for him. The King of Kanauj had done the same. He did not come personally but had sent one of his ambassadors with his gift – a remarkably beautiful piece of cloth that the emperor liked at first sight and passed on to the royal tailor.

Nakul, who was sent for, now stood before the king and the minister, shivering with fright.

"How dare you disobey a royal command, Nakul?" asked the minister, his eyes flashing. "Where's the robe you were ordered to make?"

"I cannot do it, Sir," said Nakul, his voice trembling with fear. "Even if you kill me for not doing it."

"Why not?" asked Kanishka gently. "The cloth is quite lovely."

"Yes, it is," said the tailor, who now pulled out the cloth and spread it over his arm. "Sir, you see it has the impression woven into it of a raised foot about to kick. No matter how I cut the cloth, that impression of the foot falls right in the middle. If I cut it out, nothing can be made from the rest of the cloth. I've been trying for the last two days. But I can't do a thing."

"I see," Kanishka said to himself. "The cloth must have been sent deliberately to insult me."

"What audacity!" cried the minister wrathfully. "Kanauj is a small state. We can crush them like ants in no time at all. How could the king be so foolish?"

"You're right," said Kanishka, "He'll have to pay rather dearly for his little joke. He cannot possibly expect me to swallow such an obvious insult. You may get ready to attack Kanauj. And let off Nakul."

The news soon spread across the country that Emperor Kanishka was setting out to annex Kanauj. The young king sat listlessly, with a downcast face.

"I told you time and again not to do it, Sire," said his chief minister in a bitter tone. "But you wouldn't listen to me. Now see what your little joke has done. We shall now be part of the Kushana empire."

"Well, now that the die has been cast, there's no point in thinking about it. Tell me, what shall we do to save ourselves and our kingdom?" asked the king.

"I wish I could think of a way," said the minister. "May I retire, so that I can think about it carefully?"

The king agreed, a ray of hope lighting up his heart. His chief minister was the wisest man he knew and also the most resourceful. Surely, he would think of a way out.

He returned after an hour and asked for an audience. "I've thought up a plan. It might just work," he said. "In any case, it's our only chance."

"What is it?" asked the king eagerly.

"Send for your hangman and ask him to chop off both my hands, my ears, and my nose," said the minister.

"Good god! Have you gone crazy?" cried the king. "Of course, I can't do any such thing."

"You must," urged the minister, "It's the only way. Be quick or it will all be in vain."

"But....."

"There's no time to lose," cried the minister. "Let me at least try to save you and my country."

Emperor Kanishka was already there just

outside the boundary of Kanauj. He had ordered his soldiers to camp for the night intending to strike at dawn. He went riding to get an idea about the lie of the land when a badly wounded man staggered up right on his path.

"Who are you?" asked Kanishka, wondering what the poor man could have done to deserve such brutal punishment.

"I'm the ex-minister of Kanauj, my Lord," said the man. "I have been accused of treason and punished by my king, because I had been asking him to maintain friendly relations with you and acknowledge your supremacy. He has had me thrown out of his kingdom, with orders that I should never show my face there again. Just see how he has had me maimed! I, who had served him faithfully all these years! Oh! if only I could take revenge on him for what he has done to me!"

"You shall, my good man," said Kanishka with a smile. "I'm about to attack Kanauj. Your king has no hope of survival. None at all."

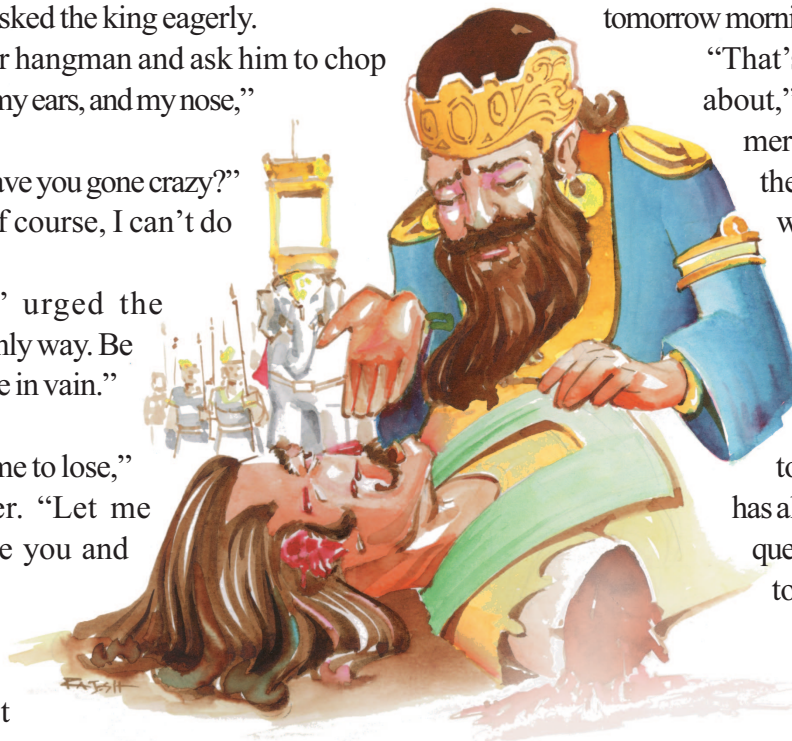
The great Kushana emperor took the minister of Kanauj to his own camp and asked his men to look after him. Fed, rested and his wounds attended to, the minister sought an interview with the king.

"What do you want?" asked Kanishka curiously, "I've already told you that I intend attacking Kanauj tomorrow morning."

"That's just what I want to talk about," said the minister. "Do you merely want to annex Kanauj to the Kushana empire or do you want to punish the man who had insulted you?"

"I want to teach him a lesson. That's why I'm here."

"Then it is quite pointless to attack tomorrow. The king has already fled Kanauj, taking his queens and his children with him, to a secret hiding place of his own. There's hardly anyone left in Kanauj who matters. The king already knew that



you were about to attack and that there was no point putting up a fight.”

“What a rotten coward!” said Kanishka indignantly, “Do you know where he’s hiding?”

“Of course, I do, Sire, and that’s what I came to tell you about. But the journey there is a tough one. I’m not sure if your people can manage it.”

“What do you mean?” cried Kanishka indignantly, “What do you take my soldiers for? They are as tough and well trained as your men – more so, since they’ve won so many battles.”

“Yes, but I’m not talking of battles, Sire,” said the minister of Kanauj. “My king has fled to a place right in the middle of the desert. I can lead you there, but you’ll have to carry water for at least a fortnight, as there’s none in the desert. Not a single oasis except where the king is hiding.”

“That’s no problem,” said Kanishka. “I’ll instruct my people to carry an adequate supply.”

The Kushana army set out for their destination, led by the minister of Kanauj. The desert seemed endless. A whole fortnight passed without their reaching anywhere near their goal. The water they had taken with them was now completely exhausted. Kanishka sent for the minister of Kanauj.

“You had told me that this journey would take just a fortnight,” he told the minister. “But there doesn’t seem to be any trace of life in sight. I hope you haven’t made a mistake.”

“No, your majesty, I’ve made no mistake,” said the minister, his eyes gleaming. “I’ve brought you here deliberately. And you’re quite right in thinking that there is no trace of life anywhere near. There’s none. We’re right in the middle of this terrible desert from where none of us can escape. Everyone—including myself—will die of thirst long before we reach the border.”

“Why did you bring us here?” asked Kanishka.

“To save my country and my king,” said the minister of Kanauj. “I’m sorry about just one thing. It was wrong of me to have cheated a noble man like you. But I had

no choice. My life is of no importance. But please forgive me for having tricked you.”

Kanishka looked at the minister and smiled. “I ought to be very angry with you, but I cannot help admiring your loyalty to your king and your kingdom. I shall not punish you. But you haven’t seen the last of me yet. It needs more than a mere trick to defeat the emperor of Kushana.”

He then addressed his soldiers. “Don’t be afraid. Don’t give up hope. There’s bound to be water somewhere below the sand, not too deep down. I shall find it.”

The people had great faith in their king. They cheered up at once. Kanishka walked across the sand, tapping it carefully with his lance. After several hours of careful survey he discovered a stretch of low land.

He held his lance and struck with all his might. As the sharp end pierced deep inside the sand, a thin trickle of water gushed out, cold and clear. The soldiers danced with joy as they drank to their fill and filled up their bottles. Before long everyone was refreshed and ready to start off again.

“Well” said Kanishka looking at the downcast face of the minister of Kanauj. “What would you have me do? I don’t want to

punish you, you know.”

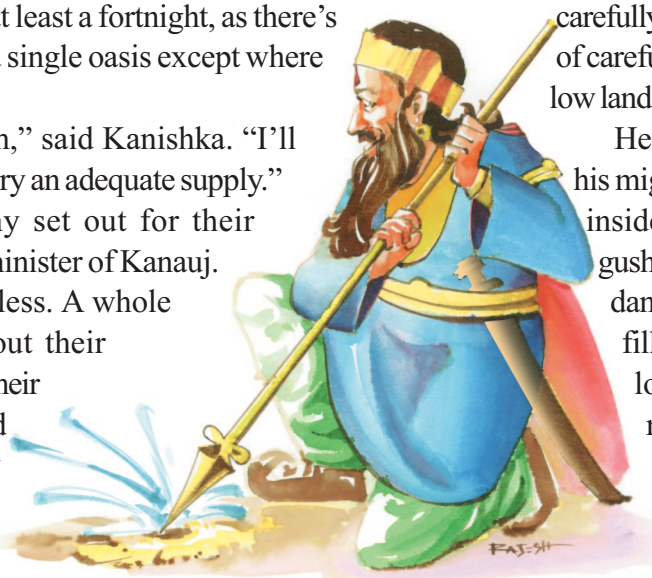
The minister fell at his feet.

“Sire, kill me if you like, but please, I beg of you, do not let my sacrifice go in vain. Do not attack Kanauj, and please spare the life of my king.”

Kanishka smiled. “Very well. It shall be as you say. I will not attack your country or your king. I will return to my own kingdom from here. But do not forget that there is a God above. No man, not even your king, can escape divine justice.”

Kanishka kept his word. He returned to his kingdom without annexing Kanauj to his empire. And legends tell us that the King of Kanauj suffered a complete and total paralysis on the day Kanishka found water in the desert.

- By Swapna Dutta





Exciting stories from child-writers!

Illustrations from child-artists!

An issue full of activities to keep you busy for several days together!

**A sparkler
to light up
your Diwali!**

**From kids,
for kids**

**Don't miss Chandamama's
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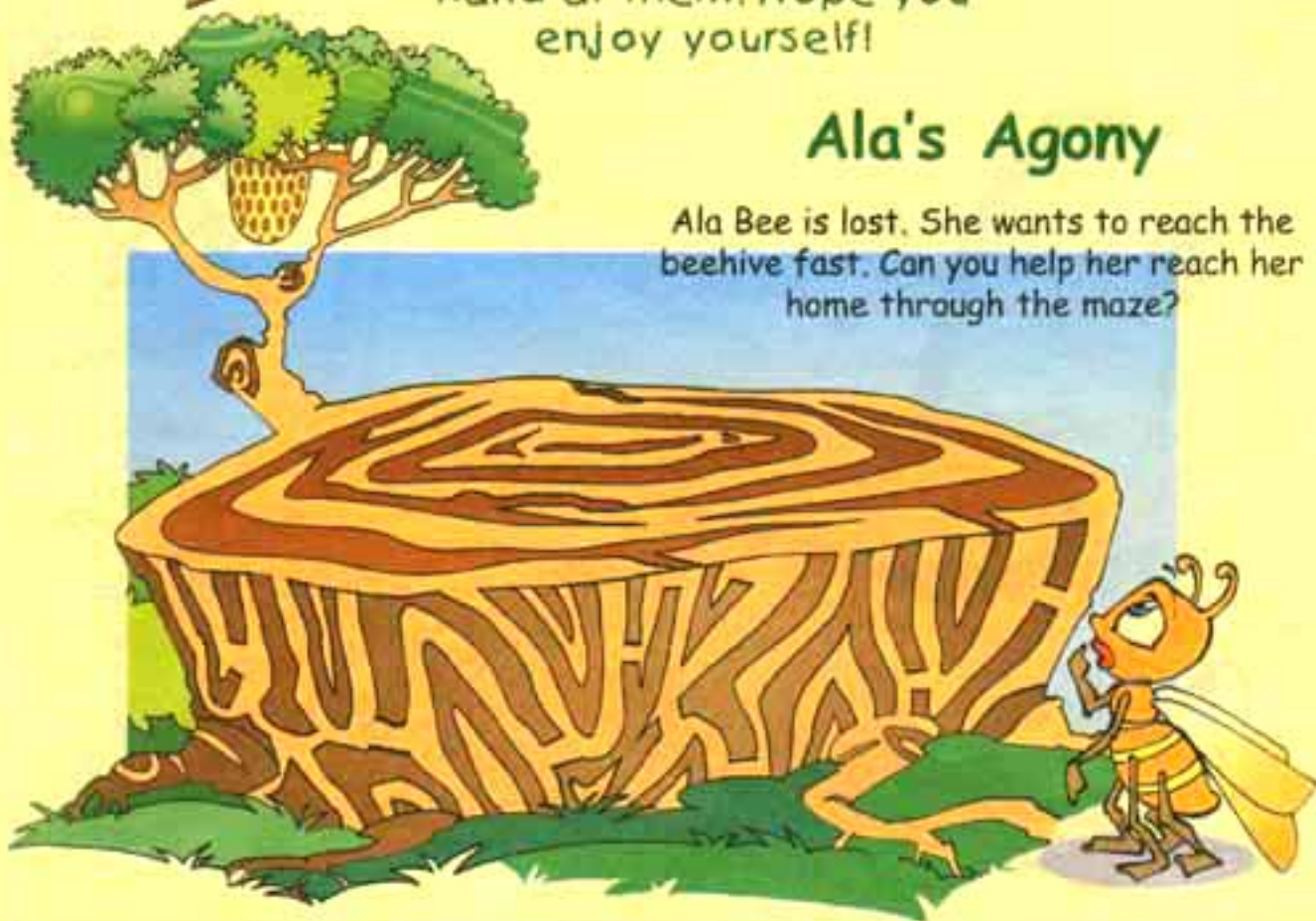
If you are not a subscriber, it's time you took out a subscription NOW.

FUN TIME

Hi, kids! Here are some fun activities for you. Try your hand at them. Hope you enjoy yourself!

Ala's Agony

Ala Bee is lost. She wants to reach the beehive fast. Can you help her reach her home through the maze?

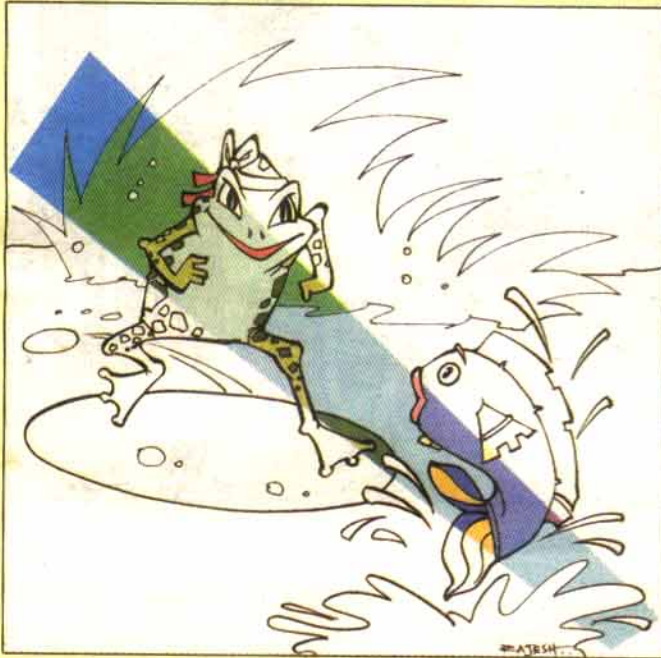


Single stroke

Isn't it a wonderful bee? But it is unique. It has been drawn in a single stroke. Why don't you try it?

Colouring Fun!

Given below is a beautiful scene. Why don't you add colours to make it appear more lively. We have also given you a colour scheme to help you. Have fun!



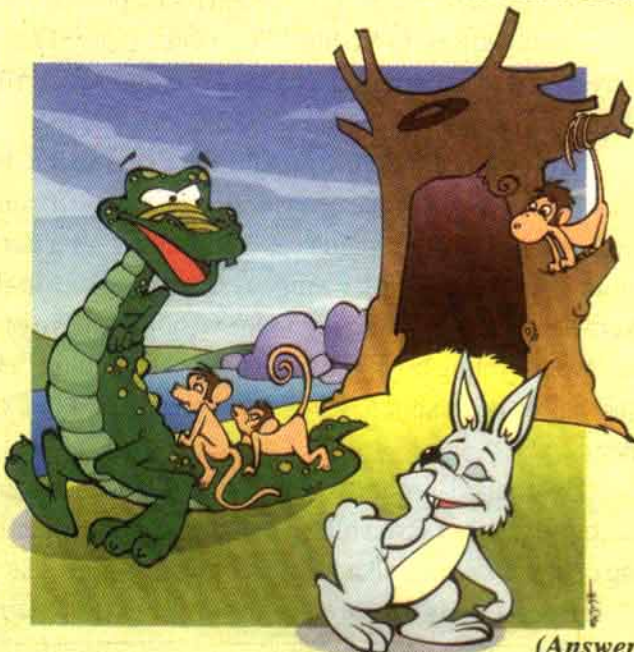
Hidden danger!



Looks like Monish Monkey is having a nice time relaxing under the tree. But there is danger lurking around, in the form of many animals. Can you identify them?

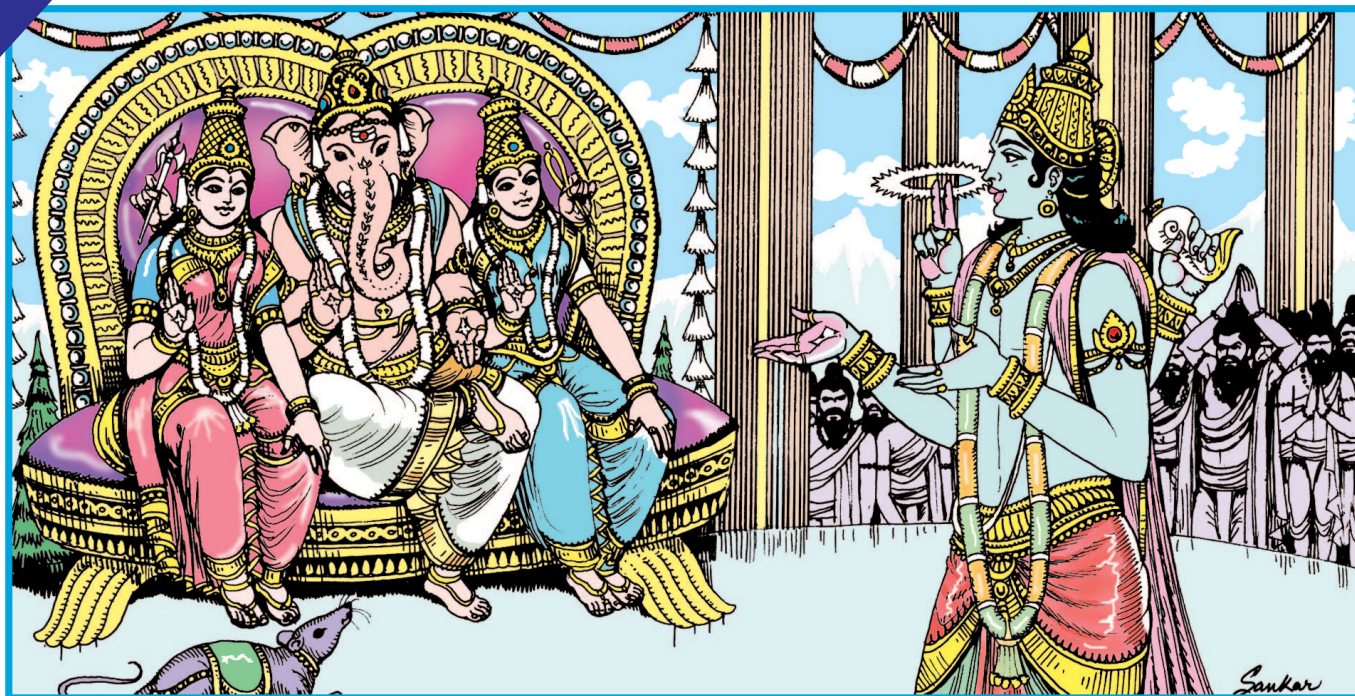
Spot 'em out!

The two pictures may appear identical, but there are eight differences between them. Happy spotting!



(Answers on page 63)

The Story of Ganesa



10. Meeting with Bhairava

Kailas, the abode of Parvati and Siva, got ready for the installation of Vighneswara as the leader (pati) of the Ganas, the group of celestials attending on the Lord. Parvati was surprised to see her son wearing a simple white dress, while she herself was bedecked in a colourful costume. “My son, don’t you want to wear something more suitable for the occasion? And why white?” she asked Vighneswara.

“Mother, white stands for upright character and intelligence and discrimination,” said Vighneswara. “That’s why I chose white for today’s ceremony.”

“All right, my son,” responded his mother. “From today, you will also be known as Shuklambharadhara, the one clad in white.”

The installation of Ganapati was a grand ceremony. Jayalakshmi as Siddhi (one with capabilities) and Vidyavati as Buddhi (intelligence and wisdom) accepted Ganapati as their Lord, and sat on either side of Gananadha, who now came to be known as Siddhi - Buddhi Vinayaka.

Lord Vishnu, who was present as a witness to the ceremony, remarked, “Even if there be a thousand hurdles, Vighneswara would one day be married. Only

after marriage will anybody become a complete person.”

“That’s very true, O Vishnu!” said Ganapati. “I foresee the day when you will be born to Kausalya as Rama. You will marry Seetha, and she will be the cause of your annihilation of the demon, Ravana!”

“When I look at your joyous face,” continued Vishnu, “I get an endearing affection for elephants.”

“Now I know, O Vishnu!” said Ganapati. “That’s why you had incarnated as a tortoise and saved the elephant Gajendra.”

After he assumed the position of Gananadha, he started on his visits. As he was going on his mouse mount, Ganesa crossed the Vindhya and landed on a dark mountain. At the nearby rainforest, a group of tribals were dancing in ecstatic joy. Ganesa took the form of a handsome young boy. The tribals surrounded him. “He must have been sent to us by the *devas*,” said one of them.

They hailed him and carried him to where they were dancing. Ganesa saw a blood-splattered stone pillar in the centre where he also found a boy dressed in black clothes and body smeared with turmeric paste, and wearing a garland of red flowers. Ganesa turned to the

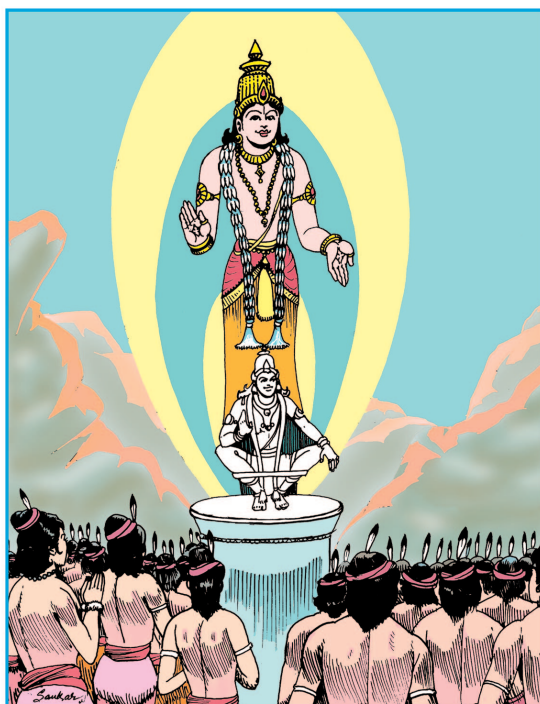
tribal chief. "May I talk to the goddess you worship? Please take me to her."

The tribal chief began laughing. "Oh! You seem to be quite naive. Our goddess is like a huge dark cloud and is ferocious to look at. Nobody can stand her sight. Anybody will die of fright!"

Ganesa said smilingly, "I'm not at all afraid. In fact, it is because of fear that you find her frightful. I'm sure none of you have actually seen her even for once. I don't think she has demanded letting of blood or any sacrifice." He then tapped the stone pillar which now turned into a beautiful idol.

The goddess, hands resting on her knees, appeared smiling. She was attractive to look at. Ganesa now placed his hands on the boy awaiting to be sacrificed. Wonder of wonders! He who had been dumb till now began to speak. "Please bless me, O holy one!" He started singing in praise of the goddess.

The tribals were taken aback by these miracles. They prostrated in front of Ganesa. He signalled them to stop doing so and said, "Don't do it. You must pay your respects to the Devi who has taken away your fear. You must look upon your god as your father, brother, and friend. Stop all sacrifice. You must offer, not blood, but flowers and fruits. This boy, who has started speaking



and singing, will be your *guru* as well as *pujari*. Your god will appear to you soon!"

After blessing them, Ganesa climbed the mountain and went up the peak, where he saw Bhairava sitting and smiling as though he was expecting a visit by Ganesa. He went and held Bhairava in a warm embrace. He immediately turned into a white figure.

"I wish I had received your blessings when I was born. In fact, a divine voice had told me even then that I would one day be blessed by Lord Ganesa and at that time I would discard my

dark colour. From now on, I wish to spend my time in your service. O Lord! Please assume your original form and bless me!"

Ganesa then assumed his original form of Vighneswara. He told Bhairava, "You have in you the powers of both Siva and Kesava. It was because of the mingling of the two powers that you were born dark. You will now be worshipped as a god." He then turned to the tribals who had accompanied him, to accept Bhairava as their god. Ganesa then disappeared from their presence.

The tribals built a home for Bhairava and began regular worship of him as their own god and protector.

(To continue)



Spot 'em out !

1. Dino's eyebrows
2. Dino's spots
3. Dino's toes
4. Bunny's tooth
5. Stones
6. Monkey's tail length
7. Branch of the tree
8. Monkey's tail winding around the branch

Brains and Books

Janmashtami and **Vinayaka Chaturthi** in September seem to have flagged off a procession of festivals in October, which slowly winds its way till, let us say, Christmas and New Year. There is so much of revelry and cementing of friendship during this festive period. It is only appropriate if this month's quiz is woven round some of the popular and also less known of India's festivals.



Write down the answers on a sheet of paper, attach the coupon below (which is a **MUST**; photo copies will not be accepted); and mail it to us to reach us before the 20th.

Important: The contest is open to children between 5 and 15 years. The answers and names of the prize-winners will appear in the issue after the next. The **first three** all correct entries will receive a copy of one of Chandamama's publications.



1. This is the portrait of a leader who gave a new dimension to a festival to make it a community celebration, thus instilling in them a sense of patriotism. Who was that leader? And which is the festival?

3. The return of a ruler to his kingdom narrated in mythology, is celebrated for 10 days. Who is that ruler?

- a) Yudhishtira
- b) Ramachandra
- c) Mahabali

4. The martyrdom of Hussain, the son of Prophet Muhammad, is observed by the Muslims. What day is that?

- a) Ramzan
- b) Id-ul-Zuha
- c) Id-ul-Fitr

5. People definitely are in a joyous mood, but there is some incongruity about this picture. What?



2. *Dasara* (Dussehra) in three areas is marked by different kinds of festivities. Pair them.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| a) Mysore | i) Burning of effigies |
| b) Delhi and U.P. | ii) Procession of deities |
| c) Kulu | iii) Procession led by a king |

6. *Makar Sankranti* is celebrated differently in different regions. Pair them.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| a) Kite-flying | i) Tamil Nadu |
| b) Boiling of rice | ii) Kerala |
| c) Pilgrimage to a hill temple | iii) Gujarat |

Answers to August Quiz

1. Buland Darwaza (Fatehpur Sikri), Gateway of India (Mumbai), Char Minar (Hyderabad), India Gate (Delhi),
2. 4-2-3-1, 3. Gol Gumbaz, 4. The mountain railway between Mettupalayam and Ootacamund (Ooty) is operated by loco engines and not diesel/electric engines, 5. Bholu, 6. Deccan Queen, 7. Hyderabad, 8. a) 1930 b) 1968 c) 1913 d) 1983.

The lone all-correct entry came from 10-year-old S. Satyajith of Ramappa Nagar, Perungudi, Chennai - 600 096. He will receive a Chandamama Book.

Brains and Books (October)

Participant's name.....

Age Class School.....

Home address

.....PIN.....

.....
Parent's signature

.....
Participant's signature



● **Where are the Pillars of Hercules located?**

- *Bharathy Nedungadi, Calicut*

The legendary Greek hero, Hercules, is believed to have 'erected' the pillars while he was on his way to capture the Oxen of Geryon, a monster with three bodies who lived on an island in the Atlantic Ocean. The Pillars are on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar. Passing out of the Mediterranean, Hercules threw up rocks on either side of the Strait. They were the Rock of Gibraltar and the headland on the Moroccan side.

● **What do the five rings on the Olympic flag denote?**

- *P.G.Ramesh Sharma, Bhopal*

On a white background are the five interlocked circles which represent the five inhabited continents of Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

Each ring has a different colour, too—red, green, black, blue, and yellow. However, the colours do not represent particular continents, and they are merely decorative.

● **Why is papier-mache so called?**

- *Gangubhai Kakodkar, Mumbai*

The expression is from French, and it literally means "paper that has been chewed or mashed". The process was first used in the West by the French in the 18th century.

Waste paper was first torn and shredded, then soaked in water, and pressed into moulds, with glue or paste applied between each layer. It was first used in England as a cheap substitute for carved woodwork.

Frederick the Great established a papier-mache factory in Berlin in 1765.

By e-mail from Sandeep Laxman:

I am reading *Chandamama* for the last six months. It is pretty good; I have also noticed the changes. Your style has improved my English. The July and August issues were splendid. I love to read the stories from Ruskin Bond and the Vikram-Vetala tales.

This came from S.H.Zahid, Gulbarga, Karnataka:

The popularity of *Chandamama* has increased among children. The comic strip 'Dushtu Dattu' is humorous. 'ABC of Science' is quite interesting. Stories under 'Mystery and Detection' are thrilling. 'Travellers to India' tells us about India's past. 'Stories from Many Cultures' is fabulous. 'The Riddle of the Laughing Fish' and 'Tejimala' were incredible folk tales. *Chandamama* is super!

Ranjani Ravi of Class 8, Padma Seshadri Bal Bhavan Sr.Secondary School, Chennai, writes:

Ever since I came to Chennai from Dehra Dun, I have become an avid fan of *Chandamama*. I like all the articles and stories, especially those from Ruskin Bond, because my heart goes back to the good times I spent in the Doon Valley, which is near Mussoorie where he lives. *Chandamama* is a very interesting, engrossing magazine. Our geography book refers to the Burra caves. Are they different from the Belum caves?

Yes, they are two different phenomena. - Editor.

This came from Ragini Venkatasubban, of Wichita, KS, USA:

I have grown to like *Chandamama* very much. My favourite parts of the magazine are the stories. I enjoy reading these wonderfully written tales; in fact, I do not skip a single one.

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